CELESTINA.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

By CHARLOTTE SMITH.

VOL. II.

DUBLIN:

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MAR

CELESTINA.

CHAPTER I.

THE preparations for a ſplendid dinner ſucceeded admirably, and Mrs. Thorold was in high good humour when her gueſts arrived. Arabella was ſtill better pleaſed; for Bettenſon, immediately on his entrance, had proteſted that ſhe never looked ſo well in her life, and Muſgrave whiſpered to her, that, "if ſhe minded her hits ſhe would be ſure of the pretty boy," for ſo he, the Cornet, was termed by his Captain. Intelligence ſo conveyed would have diſguſted and offended a young woman of delicacy, but Belle Thorold was too eager for conqueſt, and too reſolutely bent on ſecuring a man of fortune, to feel or to reſent the freedom of this addreſs from Muſgrave, to whoſe praiſes of her ſhe knew much of the attention of Bettenſon was owing. Mr. and Mrs. Cranfield and Vavaſour ſoon after arrived; and Celeſtina ſaw

with ſurpriſe the pains Miſs Thorold took at once to attract the notice of Vavaſour, and encreaſe the admiration of Bettenſon. She had never before ſeen her in the company of young unmarried men of fortune, and now obſerved with concern how totally ſhe defeated her own purpoſe. She threw herſelf into numberleſs attitudes which ſhe fancied becoming; applied her hand inceſſantly to rectify a curl, or adjuſt her necklace, by which ſhe thought to diſplay its beauty as well as that of her hair, and her throat, which ſhe had been taught to fancy eminently handſome. She whiſpered about nothing, laughed at ſome joke which nobody underſtood but herſelf and Muſgrave, then affected to be angry at ſomething he ſaid to her, then talked to him by ſigns acroſs the table, and by way of being charming was rude and childiſh. But this ſort of behaviour ſhe had ſeen practiſed by ſome very faſhionable young women; it was perfectly adapted to the level of Bettenſon's capacity; and ſhe had not judgment enough to ſee that it muſt offend any man who had either good ſenſe or good breeding.

Vavaſour, who in the preſence of Celeſtina would have ſeen perfect beauty or extraordinary merit with indifference, took no other notice of Arabella than juſt ſerved him to remark to Celeſtina that ſhe was one of the moſt conceited and pert girls he had ever ſeen. This ſerved, as they walked after tea in the garden, to introduce the diſcourſe ſhe wiſhed to hold with him: but it was extremely difficult to eſcape a moment from the vigilant aſſiduity of Montague Thorold.

"Pray,"

"Pray," ſaid ſhe to Vavaſour, "pray be more guarded: her brother will hear you."

"And that brother," ſaid he, ſomewhat abruptly, "you ſeem very much afraid of offending, though he ſeems to me to be a puppy; how can you let him prate to you as he does?"

"Indeed," replied Celeſtina, "you would not diſlike him if you knew him; and it is amazing to me that you, who are really ſo good humoured, ſhould take ſuch diſlikes to people before you can poſſibly know them."

"And when I do know them I often diſlike them more. Why now, in this family, who is there but the father that has any underſtanding, and he has too much of the prieſt about him. But here comes your highflying Oxonian. Surely it's hard not to have a moment with you, though I want to talk to you about Willoughby."

"I will ſpeak to Mr. Montague," ſaid ſhe, "and tell him ſo." She then ſtepped back a few paces, and meeting Montague Thorold, who was approaching to join them, ſhe told him that Mr. Vavaſour had ſomething to communicate to her on behalf of their mutual friend Willoughby, and that ſhe ſhould eſteem herſelf obliged to him if he would prevent their being interrupted for a few moments.

Montague, with a melancholy and ſubmiſſive look, laid his hand on his heart and ſaid—"One word from you is enough to him who lives but to obey you." He then went back to the reſt of the party, caſting a wiſtful look after Celeſtina, who, turning into another walk with Vavaſour, ſaid eagerly—"Well, and now what have

you to ſay to me from Willoughby? have you heard from him?"

"No," replied Vavaſour; "I could not well do that ſince yeſterday, nor do I indeed expect it for ſome time to come: but do you know, Miſs de Mornay, that I conſider myſelf as Willoughby's repreſentative, as a ſort of guardian to you, and am going in that character to talk to you very ſeriouſly."

"Well, cried Celeſtina, conſcious that her own conduct was irreproachable, "my ſage guardian and reverend monitor, begin then with your remonſtrance or exhortation, whichever it is to be."

"You muſt give me leave to be ſerious on this occaſion," anſwered he.

"Moſt willingly," replied Celeſtina, interrupting him; "and the more ſo becauſe I never remember in all our former converſations to have had one ſerious diſcourſe with you, and I long to ſee how you acquit yourſelf."

"I don't like the people you are with," ſaid he, "and wiſh you were any where elſe."

"I wiſh I were any where elſe myſelf; yet I like the family, and believe them to be very good ſort of people."

"Come, come, Celeſtina, you cannot be ignorant of what I mean: Captain Thorold, as I told you yeſterday, is that dangerous and hateful character, a male coquet."

"He never coquets with me I aſſure you," ſaid ſhe, "for I never give him an opportunity."

"No, becauſe at preſent his brother has the advantage of him. If you do not coquet with the

the military man, at leaſt you liſten to the ſcholar, and it may be he is the moſt dangerous of the two. It is the general idea of the country that he is in love with you; that——.

"The general idea of the country!" cried Celeſtina; "how can the country poſſibly know any thing about him or about me?"

"My dear friend," interrupted Vavaſour, "you cannot be ignorant that in theſe places the people could not exiſt if their curioſity did not keep their idleneſs from total ſtagnation. They will talk, and let them, about one another, but I won't have them talk of you, who are of another order of beings: in ſhort, I am jealous of you *for my friend*, and don't like to hear that Lord Caſtlenorth has paid off all Willoughby's incumbrances, and that he has procured him the reverſion of his titles, to engage him to break off his connection with you, which it is ſaid he formed before he came of age, and therefore thought himſelf obliged to fulfil."

Celeſtina cried with great emotion—"Dear Sir! but how falſe and fooliſh is all this."

"It is ſo," reſumed Vavaſour; "and what follows is equally or more ſo, yet it is I find generally believed."

"And what is it?"

"Why that Willoughby, having ſcruples about ſuddenly leaving you, and leaving you in comparative indigence, Lord Caſtlenorth has given you five thouſand pounds; which, with what was before left you by Mrs. Willoughby, and the promiſe of a very conſiderable living in the gift of the Caſtlenorths to a clergyman if you

you marry one, have rendered you a desirable object in Mr. Thorold's eyes as a wife for his youngest son, whom finally you have accepted of, and are to be married to very soon; as Miss Fitz-Hayman has insisted upon this before she gives her hand to her cousin, which is also to happen very soon in Italy."

"Miss Fitz-Hayman!" said Celestina, turning pale; "and pray, my good Vavasour, where have you learned this legend?"

"In London," replied he, "I collected enough to make me uneasy about your situation. I picked up more since I came down to Cranfields, for his wife is a gossip of the first pretensions; and as to the Fitz-Hayman part of the story, their going abroad so soon after Willoughby has, I take it for granted, confirmed it in the opinion of every body."

"Are they gone abroad then?" said Celestina.

"So say the newspapers; and I fancy rightly." He then took one from his pocket and read this paragraph:

Dover, April 26, 17—

"Yesterday Lord and Lady Castlenorth, "and their daughter, the Hon. Miss Fitz-"Hayman, with a great retinue, sailed from "hence on their way to the South of Europe."

Celestina was silent a moment; for not all her faith on the unchangeable affections of her lover could guard her from a momentary shock: recovering herself however, she said—"They may

may be, and I ſuppoſe *are* gone; but—certainly—certainly Mr. Willoughby had no ſhare in their going. You ſurely do not think he had? As we know ſome part—great part of what you have heard, to be utterly falſe and unfounded, why may it not all be ſo? Certainly you do not believe any of it."

"Pardon me," anſwered Vavaſour, "I believe that this young man, this Montague Thorold, is what they call in love with you; for the reſt, I know ſome of it is falſe, and I believe the greateſt part of it is ſo."

"Gracious heaven! you have doubts then, Vavaſour: doubts whether Willoughby—— But it is impoſſible you *can* doubt it. You know he is all honour, generoſity, integrity, and goodneſs."

"I know I always thought ſo, or I ſhould not have loved him better than any man breathing. But don't let me alarm you; I cannot doubt when I recollect all I ever knew of my friend: yet I very honeſtly tell you, that the myſtery he made to me of his reaſons for going abroad, the gloomy reveries in which I ſo often ſaw him, his evident ſtruggles with himſelf, and a thouſand odd circumſtances which ſtruck me when we were laſt together—upon my ſoul, Celeſtina, I know not what to think, and ſhould deceive you were I to tell you that I have no doubts: yet they ariſe rather from my miſtruſt of human nature in general than my opinion of George as an individual: but when I look at you, and remember that he was within one day of calling you his, I cannot upon any common

principles

principles account for his conduct, and am ſure that no common motives can juſtify it."

Celeſtina, whoſe heart ſunk within her while it could not deny the juſtice of this remark, ſighed deeply, but remained ſilent; and Vavaſour went on—"Be *his* motives, however, what they may, it is certainly your determination to await the event of this myſterious journey?"

"It is certainly," ſaid ſhe faintly.

"Well then, is there not any more eligible ſituation for you than one where you are the ſubject of ſuch reports as I have juſt repeated to you? Suppoſe, if it be only for ſuppoſition ſake, they were to reach Willoughby: if he ſtill loves you——"

"If!" repeated Celeſtina; "good heaven! you believe then that it admits of a queſtion."

"I did not mean to hurt you. But my dear Celeſtina, there is nothing ſo inſecure as our affections I am afraid; and you muſt recollect too many inſtances of their change to ſuppoſe it *quite* impoſſible that—"

"Well, I will interrupt you no more. If then—if Willoughby ſtill loves me——"

"He will ſuffer extremely from ſuch a report; and ſhould—though I allow it to be very improbable—*ſhould* any change have happened, your apparent approbation of Montague Thorold will juſtify that caprice which nothing elſe *can* juſtify."

"Ah! Vavaſour, ſaid Celeſtina, in faultering accents, "I ſee, I too evidently ſee, that you believe your friend is loſt to me for ever, and

and that all you have now ſaid is merely to prepare me for a blow, which, if it fell on me ſuddenly, would, you think, deſtroy me; but believe me, Vavaſour, believe me, ſuſpenſe ſuch as I have long endured—ſuch as I at this moment endure—is, I *think*, more inſupportable than any certainty could be, unleſs it were the certainty that Willoughby is more miſerable than I am: that I think I could not bear: but for the reſt, however I might ſuffer in my pride or in my love, I truſt that my mind would in time be reconciled to whatever is inevitable; and perhaps," continued ſhe, ſtruggling with the violent emotion ſhe felt—" perhaps that very pride might aſſiſt me to cure the anguiſh of diſappointed and improperly indulged affection. But yet it is ſurely impoſſible Willoughby *can* have acted as theſe ſuſpicions in regard to Miſs Fitz-Hayman would make me imagine, and ſtill write as he writes to me! However, Vavaſour, I again entreat you, if you know more than I do, to conceal nothing from me through miſplaced and needleſs tenderneſs."

" You know me very little," anſwered Vavaſour, " or you would know how little concealment and diſſimulation are in my nature. My dear Miſs De Mornay, I have faithfully related to you all I know of our friend, and even my half formed doubts I have not attempted to conceal from you: be now equally ingenuous with me, and tell me, whether you think your preſent ſituation is either the moſt pleaſant or the moſt eligible you could poſſibly chuſe."

"It is not pleaſant," anſwered Celeſtina, "becauſe I am not miſtreſs of my time; but it is eligible ſurely, becauſe Willoughby himſelf in ſome meaſure placed me in it, and it is to his wiſhes I am to attend while he is yet intereſted about me, and not to the vague and unfounded reports of people who care nothing whether I am happy or miſerable, ſo long as they have ſomething to talk of."

"But reflect a moment whether Willoughby, when he mentioned his deſire of your continuing here, was aware that Captain Thorold would *therefore* remain at home all the ſummer, or that Montague Thorold would chuſe to make you the object of his romantic paſſion, and the ſubject of his poetical panegyric; you cannot but know that he does both; and were *you* wilfully blind to it, his behaviour to-day would have ſufficiently convinced *me*."

Celeſtina could not deny his extreme particularity in company, and his private declarations were leſs equivocal: without however acknowledging either to Vavaſour, ſhe ſaid in general, that for many reaſons ſhe ſhould not be diſpleaſed to change her reſidence if ſhe knew whither to go.

Vavaſour then began to lament that he had no mother, no ſiſter, of whoſe friendly reception of her he could be aſſured; "but," added he, "my dear Miſs De Mornay, give me a day or two, and ſome proper place will perhaps occur to me, or rather to an excellent female friend whom I will apply to In the mean time I will ſee Cathcart, as I propoſe to ride over

over to Alveſtone to-morrow, and we will talk the buſineſs over together." He then took her hand, and in a manner more tender and leſs lively than was uſual with him, aſked her if ſhe would pardon him for any thing he might have ſaid to give her pain. Celeſtina aſſured him ſhe could not forgive becauſe ſhe had never been offended, but that ſhe muſt ever be greatly obliged to him for the friendly part he had taken; and then, fearing that ſome invidious remarks might be made by the company they had left if they were any longer abſent, ſhe deſired Vavaſour to rejoin them, while ſhe went for a few moments to her own room to recover from the ſtill apparent emotion which ſhe had been thrown into from what had paſſed.

She had hardly, however, time to breathe, before ſhe ſaw Montague Thorold walking anxiouſly on the lawn before her windows, looking towards them as if he knew ſhe was returned to her apartment, and almoſt immediately afterwards Mr. Cranfield's carriage drove up to the door to take them home. Celeſtina now, therefore, compoſing herſelf as well as ſhe was able, haſtened down to the company, who, except Montague and Vavaſour, were hardly conſcious of her rejoining them: Mr. Cranfield being buſied in giving to the elder Mr. Thorold a long detail of a cauſe that had been lately decided at the ſeſſions in which he had a principal ſhare; Mrs. Thorold and Mrs. Cranfield engaged in ſettling the affairs of the neighbourhood, and comparing notes on the frequency of Mr. Langly, the curate's viſits to Mrs. Poole, the widow

widow of a rich farmer, a matter in which theſe good ladies were mightily intereſted; whileMiſs Thorold was violently flirting with Bettenſon; and the other two military men walking together were talking over their former adventures, and Muſgrave laughing at Captain Thorold for being thrown out, as he termed it, by his brother with Celeſtina. "What the devil," ſaid he, "d'ye bury yourſelf alive in this manner for, if Montague is to ſupplant you? Faith, my dear Edmund, 'tis ſo much againſt the honour of us all, that if you don't make more progreſs I ſhall try what I can do myſelf. Don't you ſee that her attachment to Willoughby is all ſtuff, and that ſhe throws out her lure for this Vavaſour? If you like her, what a curſed fool you muſt be to let her ſlip through your fingers."

"As to liking," replied Captain Thorold, "you don't ſuppoſe I intend to commit matrimony. The girl is handſome, and has more ſenſe than moſt of them—"

"And therefore 'tis more worth a man's while to make a fool of her. There I perfectly agree with you; for though, if I were condemned by any deviliſh miſchance to marry, I ſhould dread nothing ſo much as one of your ſenſible women; yet it is glorious to ſee how a little fooliſh flattery can ſet the ſenſe of the ſhrewdeſt of them at nought. But by the way, Edmund, how did you get off with that buſineſs in Ireland?"

"Which? for I had ſo much buſineſs upon my hands that I don't know what you mean."

"Why between you and Miſs O'rien: was there not an impertinent brother or—"

"Oh!

" Oh! aye poor Fanny Obrien. 'Twas the old ſtory: Fanny was very pretty, and faith I was very fond of being with them all, for there were three others, all ſweet little dears. Their mother, a good ſort of a widow, was a little upon the *qui vive* when ſhe heard I had a fortune and ſo forth, and ſomehow or other I lived a good deal at the houſe, and talked nonſenſe to the girls in my way you know, till this Miſs Fanny took it into her head to fancy herſelf in love with me, and to ſuppoſe I had told her that I was ſo with her, though if I did upon my ſoul 'twas only by implication. I dangled to be ſure, and dined and danced with her; but I meant nothing, and was obliged at laſt to tell her mother ſo, who very plainly ſignified to me, one evening after I had paſſed the day with them, that it was time to underſtand me. Well, I gave her to underſtand then, as civilly as I could though, for faith they were a good ſort of a family, that I had no thoughts of marrying, and the good gentlewoman waxed wrath about it, and told me I had done a very unhandſome thing in winning her daughter's affections. I could only lament they were ſo eaſily won, and return them undamaged by me. Something I ſaid, however, gave Mrs. Obrien offence, and ſhe deſired to ſee me no more; a prohibition which I of courſe did not attempt to diſobey; and ſome other pretty girl falling in my way, faith I thought no more of my poor Fanny, till being one night at an aſſembly at Dublin, I ſaw a great buſtle ſoon after my entrance, and was told that Miſs Obrien had fainted away upon ſeeing

ſeeing me, and was gone home extremely ill. 'Twas no fault of mine you know that the girl was ſo ſimply ſuſceptible: but her brother, a fierce young ſailor, who came a day or two afterwards from his ſhip, thought otherwiſe, and talking to me rather cavalierly, we agreed that the matter muſt be ſettled in the Phœnix Park by a brace of piſto'ls. *Un beau jour* we accordingly met there, and exchanged each a couple of ſhot with all poſſible politeneſs, in which it was my fortune to lodge a bullet in the fleſh of his left arm, which was immediately extracted. I heard there was no danger; and as he was of courſe ſatisfied, I came off to England the next day, having taken my paſſage ſome time before."

"Your folks here at home never heard of the hazard you ran?"

"No, I believe not. My father is a little too apt to lecture and preach on ſuch occaſions, and ſo 'tis as well ſunk I believe; and ſince I've been in England, faith I've had no inclination to amuſe myſelf in the ſame way, nor indeed any opportunity, except with this Celeſtial beauty, and ſhe don't ſeem to take to me."

"The greater will be the glory," replied Muſgrave. "I own I ſhould like of all things, were I thee, to drive out a ſolemn, ſettled, ſentimental affection from ſuch a heart as her's, and jockey thy brother Montague."

Here the gentlemen were interrupted by the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Cranfield and Vavaſour; after which Muſgrave and Bettenſon took leave themſelves, having firſt received a general invitation from Mrs. Thorold and her daughter;

daughter; who, though by no means pleaſed to obſerve that Vavaſour, entirely occupied by Celeſtina, had beheld and heard her with frigid indifference, was yet much conſoled by being almoſt certain that ſhe had ſecured the heart of the little Cornet. She judged very right. Muſgrave, to whoſe care the father of Bettenſon had recommended him, had purpoſely introduced him to Arabella Thorold, under the idea of detaching him from two milliners, to both of whom he had been making very ſerious love ever ſince his reſidence at Exeter; and the elder Mr. Bettenſon was ſo deſirous of ſaving him from a connection of that kind, which he was thus likely to form, that he no ſooner heard of his growing partiality to Miſs Thorold, than he beſought Captain Muſgrave by every poſſible means to encourage it, declaring it that fortune alone was no object to him, and that he ſhould conſider himſelf happy if his ſon was fixed in his choice of the daughter of ſo worthy and reſpectable a man as Mr. Thorold.

CHAPTER II.

THE ſhort remainder of the evening paſt very unpleaſantly to Celeſtina while ſhe continued in company, for Montague, to whom ſhe could not prevail upon herſelf to be rude, was yet ſo diſſatisfied, either from the conſtraint he obſerved ſhe wore towards him, or from her long conference with Vavaſour, that he could not conceal his concern, and ſighed ſo loud and ſo long, as to attract notice and ſome very acrimonious ſpeeches from his mother. Mr. Thorold too, ſhe thought, looked uneaſy, and Arabella evidently diſliked her more than before; while the Captain's rude examination of her countenance, from which ſhe always ſhrunk, was now more painful to her than ever. She got away as ſoon as poſſible; but was far, very far from finding repoſe in ſolitude. All that Vavaſour had ſaid now returned to torture her; and inſtead of finding ſleep when ſhe retired to her pillow, the ſame uneaſy thoughts and haraſſing conjectures which had long rendered it of difficult acquirement, had now received ſuch a reinforcement as made it impoſſible for her to ſleep at all.

She roſe with the dawn of day, hoping ſhe might in the courſe of it ſee Cathcart; and yet from him ſhe had little to expect as to her removal,

val, unleſs he could find for her ſome farm houſe in the neighbourhood of Jeſſy, where ſhe might have board and lodging. But even to this ſcheme there were objections: it would be too near the Thorold's: the young men might ſtill viſit her, and the reports ſtill obtain which Vavaſour had repeated to her; becauſe, though Montague was really, ſhe found, returning to Oxford in a few days, there would be other occaſions of his being at home. It was alſo too near Alveſtone, which, ſince ſhe almoſt deſpaired now of ſeeing again with pleaſure, ſhe wiſhed to eſcape ſeeing even at the diſtance from which ſhe frequently beheld it; when the clump of firs and ſome of the high grounds in the park, conſpicuous from almoſt every part of the country within ten or fifteen miles, often drew from her heart many a bitter ſigh.

About eight o'clock, ſhe ſaw Cathcart enter the little lawn before the houſe and immediately went down to him. He approached her with more than ordinary cheerfulneſs; but in anſwering her queſtions told her he had not heard from Mr. Willoughby.

"I flattered myſelf you had," ſaid Celeſtina, ſinking again into dejection, "for I thought, Cathcart, you ſeemed unuſually cheerful."

"If any thing could make me long ſo," replied he, "when you, my dear Madam, and my noble friend are divided and uneaſy, it would be the intelligence I have received about my ſiſter, whoſe ſituation, you know, and my ſolicitude for her and her children, was indeed the only one Mr. Willoughby's goodneſs would have left me,

me, if he had himſelf been as happy as he deſerved to be."

"And what then have you heard," enquired Celeſtina, "of Mrs. Elphinſtone?"

"That her huſband, who has been long wandering about the world, is at length ſettled, in a very remote ſituation indeed, but one which he happens to like and which is likely to become profitable. He is appointed to ſuperintend the fiſheries eſtabliſhed by a ſociety of gentlemen in the weſtern iſlands of Scotland, and is already put in poſſeſſion of a good houſe in the iſle of Skie. Thither my ſiſter is about to follow him; but I have prevailed upon her to ſend to me her two youngeſt children, whom I ſhall put to nurſe in ſome farm houſe where Jeſſy or I can viſit them every day: the other two are as many as it will be poſſible for her to take care of, and when ſhe is ſettled, I have engaged to conduct the little ones to her. She has already received money from Elphinſtone to enable her to ſet out well equipped, and waits only to ſee me before ſhe takes leave of London, and, ſhe ſays, ſhe hopes for ever."

"And when do you go?"

"I propoſe ſetting out for London on Thurſday, unleſs you or Mr. Willoughby have any commands for me that may detain me longer."

"Alas! Cathcart," ſaid Celeſtina, "I am afraid you will receive no intelligence of Willoughby by that time: but I can find, I believe, ſomething for you to do for me which will rather expedite than detain you."

Cathcart then aſſuring her how happy every opportunity of ſhewing his gratitude would make him,

him, Celeſtina ſaid—"Well then, my commands are ſimply theſe, that inſtead of going on horſeback you come hither in a poſt-chaiſe on Thurſday morning, and take me with you to ſee my dear Jeſſy, as I cannot go without having that ſatisfaction, and afterwards, Cathcart, you ſhall take me to London with you."

Cathcart expreſſing ſome ſurpriſe at her reſolution, ſhe told him that ſhe would account for it as they went; that Devonſhire was at preſent very unpleaſant to her, and that ſhe fancied change of place would relieve her ſpirits more than all her reaſon and her philoſophy, "which, to tell you the truth, Cathcart," ſaid ſhe, "may be accuſed of acting a little like Horatio; and I ſometimes am tempted to ſay to them—

"Is then the boaſted purpoſe of your friendſhip
"To tell Caliſta what a wretch ſhe is?
"Alas! what needed that?"

But however, I find really, Cathcart, that I cannot here obey our dear friend in the points he moſt inſiſts upon, thoſe of keeping my cheerfulneſs and preſerving my health, and I have a mind to try his remedy and ramble a little. Perhaps I may go to Scotland with your ſiſter. Do you think ſhe would admit me as a travelling companion?"

"Admit you, dear Madam," ſaid Cathcart. "Surely ſhe would be but too much honoured. But you can never be ſerious?"

"It is, however, very likely that I may become ſo. At preſent, my reſolution is to take leave of this family and go with you to London.

You

You will ſee Vavaſour to-day, and you may tell him ſo."

They then ſettled the hour at which the poſt-chaiſe was to be ready for her the next morning ſave one. Cathcart returned to Alveſtone; and Celeſtina to the houſe, where ſhe propoſed taking the earlieſt opportunity of acquainting Mr. Thorold with her determination.

She conſidered herſelf rather as Mr. Thorold's viſitor than as the gueſt of any other of the family; and wiſhed to have his approbation for the ſtep ſhe was about to take, without however aſſigning the reaſons that actuated her to take it. She had frequently fancied of late that he ſaw more than he choſe to notice, and that, though he was too generous to repent the friendly invitation he had given her, he was too prudent not to foreſee ill conſequences from her long continuing to accept it. In the midſt of a large family, to which he was greatly attached, Mr. Thorold lived much of his time alone. His ſtudy and his pariſhioners divided the day, and, except at dinner and for about an hour afterwards, his wife and children ſaw very little of him. Celeſtina was uneaſy till ſhe had ſpoken to him; and therefore when he roſe to go for his walk after dinner, ſhe enquired whether he would allow her to go part of the way with him, as ſhe wiſhed to ſpeak a few words to him alone.

Montague bluſhed deeply as ſhe thus addreſſed herſelf to his father; who led her however out of the room, and taking her arm within his

in

in his uſual friendly way, took the way towards the village ſtreet, where he had, he ſaid, ſome patients to viſit that evening; for he was the phyſician as well as the paſtor of his people. After a few minutes of embarraſſing ſilence on the part of Celeſtina, ſhe collected courage enough to tell him, that in conſequence of ſome intelligence ſhe had learned from Mr. Vavaſour, ſhe had determined to go to London.

"Not under *his* convoy I hope?" cried Mr. Thorold, eagerly interrupting her.

"No," anſwered Celeſtina, a little ſtartled by the manner in which he ſpoke: "not by any means with him, or under his care; but with Mr. Cathcart, who is going on buſineſs of his own."

"You know, my dear Miſs De Mornay," ſaid Mr Thorold very gravely, "that my houſe and my beſt advice are equally and always at your ſervice: you may have reaſons for quitting the one and rejecting the other, into which were I to enquire it would produce for me nothing but mortification. I will *not* then enquire; I will only entreat you to conſider well, whither and with whom you go. Mr. Vavaſour has, I apprehend, no mother or ſiſter, and you cannot be ignorant that he has the character of indulging himſelf in liberties, which even in this age of freedom make him rather a marked man."

"My dear Sir," replied Celeſtina, "I have not the moſt diſtant idea of quitting your protection for one ſo little proper as Mr. Vavaſour's muſt be, though he is the moſt intimate friend of Mr. Willoughby. But my meaning merely is——"

"Come,"

"Come," cried Mr. Thorold, interrupting her, "I will explain your meaning, or rather the meaning of Vavaſour. He has been talking to you about my ſon Montague. He has repreſented the impropriety of your liſtening to ſuch ſort of converſation as I know Montague has more than once entertained you with. Is it not ſo?

"I own it is," ſaid Celeſtina in ſome confuſion.

"I do not blame him," rejoined Mr. Thorold; "and if his vigilance is the effect of *friendſhip*, I commend him. Nor do I, my dear ward, diſapprove of your wiſhing to ſhun the boyiſh importunity of Montague. I only entreat you to reflect well on your removal, and to remember, that notwithſtanding Mr. Vavaſour's intimate connection with Willoughby, I conſider myſelf as having ſome claim to your confidence and as in ſome degree anſwerable for your diſpoſal of yourſelf."

"You are very good, dear Sir, and deſerve I am ſure my gratitude as well as my confidence. You deſerve too that I ſhould ſpeak to you with the utmoſt ſincerity." She then related to him, all that Vavaſour had ſaid to her of the reports that had obtained relative to her and Mr. Montague; and concluded by ſaying, that though ſhe highly eſteemed his ſon, and had the moſt grateful regard for the whole family, ſhe could not liſten to theſe reports without concern, becauſe they might be diſpleaſing to him and injurious to views he might have for his ſon, even putting herſelf out of the queſtion.

queſtion. "I think therefore, dear Sir," added ſhe, "that it will be better for me to put an end to my viſit for this time, and to travel into the North with a ſiſter of Mr. Cathcart's, who is going thither: change of ſcene will relieve my ſpirits, and wandering give me perhaps a new reliſh for the beauties of Devonſhire; where, believe me, I ſhall be moſt happy to return, whenever I can do it without ſubjecting my beſt friends as well as myſelf to uneaſineſs."

"I am vexed," ſaid Mr. Thorold, "that the romantic temper of Montague has made this removal neceſſary in your idea. He goes very ſoon to Oxford: indeed in a few days: and afterwards, perhaps, you would find my houſe leſs objectionable. As to the goſſip of the country, you are I hope too wiſe to mind it, and I have long ſince learned to deſpiſe it. *That*, therefore ſhould not weigh with me at all. But in return for your charming ſincerity, I will ſpeak very plainly to you. Montague is a young man of good abilities, and of an excellent heart: but the violence of his paſſions keeps me in perpetual concern leſt they ſhould deprive me of all the happineſs that I may hope to derive from ſuch a ſon: and already I have twice, with great difficulty, delivered him from engagements he had made with young women quite unworthy of him: engagements which, though he ſoon ſaw the folly and impropriety of them, he fancied his honour obliged him to keep. Another—I know not who; one perhaps not much ſuperior to theſe, (as I learned by

by a friend who keeps a ſteady eye upon him,) had ſucceeded to the imaginary poſſeſſion of his affections when he laſt came home. I was uneaſy at it; but perhaps conſidered my own feelings too much and yours too little, when I ſaw with pleaſure his inſtant admiration of you. I encouraged it, becauſe I hoped, that in learning what true merit was, he would hereafter be leſs liable to be miſled by the poor ſemblance of it, when aided by a pretty face, or a ſlender ſhape: at the ſame time I thought I had ſufficiently guarded him againſt any exceſs of attachment, by repreſenting to him your ſituation and convincing him it would be not only preſumptuous but hopeleſs. I believe, however, from ſome late obſervations I have made, that I have judged ill; and to ſave him from maladies that might be trifling or curable, have expoſed him to the ſeverer misfortune of feeling a real paſſion where he can meet with no return."

Celeſtina could not with ſincerity diſclaim what ſhe had ſo much reaſon to fear was true. Affecting, however, to believe that Mr. Montague would ſoon loſe the impreſſion when ſhe was no longer preſent, and would find many infinitely more worthy of his affection, who might be proud to receive and at liberty to return it, ſhe renewed the ſubject of her going to London, beſought Mr. Thorold ſtill to honour her with his friendſhip, and promiſed to return to him again in the winter if no objection ſhould ariſe to his receiving her. She heard with gratitude the advice he gave her about Vavaſour.—"Do not," ſaid he, "put yourſelf too

too much in his power under the idea of his being the choſen friend of Willoughby. He is called, and I believe is, a man of honour, in the common acceptation of the term; but I am afraid there is little real honour among thoſe who are in any reſpect ſo very licentious as Vavaſour is ſaid to be in regard to your ſex; the ſtile in which he lives among a certain deſcription of women, is not only the means of degrading all in his opinion, but hardens the heart while it corrupts the morals: and with all Vavaſour's boaſted honour, I dare ſay he is a man, who, if he happened to take a fancy to the miſtreſs of his friend, would ſteal her affections and her perſon without heſitation, and ſuppoſe, that by an appeal to the ſword or piſtol to vindicate the wrong he had done, the action, however unprincipled, would derogate nothing from his honour."

"Sure, Sir," ſaid Celeſtina, "Willoughby would not have ſo much friendſhip for Mr. Vavaſour were he ſuch a man?"

"I don't know, my dear," anſwered Mr. Thorold, "that Vavaſour is ſuch a man; but you will allow at leaſt that it is very probable; and as to Willoughby's friendſhip, I am afraid that is no criterion of merit. The college friendſhips of young men——But let me not make you too much out of humour with the world, while I mean only to put you upon your guard againſt the evil with which it too often teems towards unprotected youth and loveliness. It grieves my heart to let you go. But—upon the whole, if you promiſe to write to me often

—to remain with this ſiſter of Cathcart's, who is, I conclude, a woman of character, and to take no new courſe without informing me; above all, to keep yourſelf quite out of the power of Vavaſour, and not to be introduced to any of his acquaintance by way of ſtaying with them, unleſs you are very certain who they are; I ſay, on all theſe conditions I will not oppoſe your going, though it hurts me to conſent to it."

Celeſtina having thus relieved her mind by explaining herſelf to her generous friend, became better ſatisfied than ſhe had been for ſome time, and found at leaſt an alleviation of the concern that preyed on her heart, in the idea of change of place. She parted ſoon after from Mr. Thorold, whoſe buſineſs ſhe was fearful of interrupting, and walked back towards the houſe, intending to open her intentions of leaving them, to the reſt of the family, when they were aſſembled to their tea.

Montague, however, who had never loſt ſight of her, but had followed her and his father at a diſtance during their walk, now haſtened acroſs the field ſhe was in to meet her. His eagerly enquiring eyes were fixed on her face when he came up to her; but not daring to aſk the ſubject of her conference with his father, nor able to turn his thoughts from it, he only ſaid—"Well, Miſs De Mornay, you have left my father?"

"You ſee I have," ſaid Celiſtina, ſmiling, "and I have left him well ſatisfied with the reaſons

reaſons I have given for quitting his hoſpitable roof on Thurſday."

"Quitting it!" exclaimed Montague, turning pale—"quitting it! What are you going to leave us then? and before I go to Oxford?"

"My good friend," replied ſhe, "you did not ſurely ſuppoſe that I was to be a perennial viſitor at your father's. I have now been here almoſt a month, and you muſt certainly allow that to be a very long viſit from a perſon, who, till within five weeks, had not the good fortune to be known to your family at all."

"I know not," ſaid Montague, ſighing, "what I thought, or what I ſuppoſed; but I would to heaven I could forget having ever ſeen you, as eaſily as I am convinced you will loſe the remembrance of me."

Celeſtina, with one of thoſe faſcinating ſmiles which lent ſuch peculiar charms to her countenance, now aſſured him that he was miſtaken: "indeed," ſaid ſhe, "I ſhall always remember you all, with pleaſure and with gratitude."

"Well," anſwered he, "I thank you; and I thank you for not excepting me, and by putting us all together, ſhewing that you have no particular favourite in the family, but that one is as indifferent as another. But however, I wiſh you would not ſmile, for I cannot bear it."

"Ridiculous!" cried Celeſtina. "I am amazed, Mr. Montague, that with your underſtanding, you give way ſo frequently to

ſuch abſurd fits of—I hardly know what to call it—a romantic ſtile of behaviour, which you ſeem to think women like, whereas I aſſure you that to me at leaſt it is the moſt unpleaſant in the world."

"When did you ever ſee me in this romantic ſtile, as you are pleaſed to term it, with any woman but yourſelf?"

"I never did, becauſe I happened not to have ſeen you with any other women than thoſe of your own family: but you know that your mother, your ſiſter and your brother, nay, even your father, all have repeatedly ſaid it was your way with every body."

"They are miſtaken however; and I own *I* have often miſtaken a tranſient degree of liking for love, which I never felt—no never—till I ſaw you!

"For ſeveral virtues
"Have I liked ſeveral women; never any
"With ſo full ſoul, but ſome defect in her
"Did quarrel with the nobleſt grace ſhe owed
"And put it to the ſoil: but you!—oh you!
"So perfect and ſo peerleſs, were created
"Of every creature's beſt."

"There now," ſaid Celeſtina, "that is exactly what I complain of: there is no rational converſation with you, capable as you are of adorning it; but, as Arabella very truly ſays, you do nothing but make ſpeeches out of Otway or Shakſpeare."

"Arabella did not ſay I made ſpeeches, but that I made love; and I make love becauſe I feel

feel it—feel it to an exceſs which is dreadful, becauſe I know, and have known from the beginning, that it is hopeleſs! But as this hurts nobody but myſelf, I don't ſee why it ſhould diſpleaſe you, or why you ſhould affect to miſunderſtand, or attempt to laugh off a paſſion, which, whatever may be its effect on me, can never diſturb your tranquillity or that of your fortunate lover."

Celeſtina finding him thus ſerious, thought it would be better, and indeed more generous, not to pretend ignorance of his meaning, and to reaſon with rather than rally him; ſhe therefore dropped the gayer tone with which ſhe began the converſation, and ſaid gravely—"Mr. Montague, I will not affect then to miſunderſtand you. I am undoubtedly honoured by your partiality, and very much concerned if it is the ſource of preſent pain to you. Let it become rather a ſource of pleaſure to us both, by reducing it to that generous and diſintereſted friendſhip which I may return with ſatisfaction, and for thoſe warmer ſentiments, which you now ſuppoſe are entirely diverted from any other object, ſeek one who can deſerve and return them, and ſpare me, I beſeech you, the pain of believing, even for a moment, that I have brought ſolicitude and ſuffering into any part of a family to which I am ſo much obliged. I need not tell you my ſituation: you know it is a very comfortleſs and a very uncertain one: perhaps I may never ſee Mr. Willoughby again; or if I do, perhaps I may ſee him the huſband of another. But in either caſe my attachment to him is unalterable; and were I ſure to-mor-

row

row that we are divided never again to meet, I ſhould only think of ſubmitting in ſuch a way as would leaſt wound him, to a blow, which I am ſure he will not voluntarily give me, but never of running the hazard of making unhappy ſome equally worthy man, by giving to importunity what I can never give to love—for my heart has been Willoughby's ever ſince I knew I had one, and it will be his, till I remember it no longer."

Montague gave no other anſwer to this than a deep ſigh; and Celeſtina pauſing a moment to recover herſelf from the emotion her words had occaſioned, went on—" You love quotations, and undoubtedly recollect, though perhaps from an author I ought not to quote, theſe words: ' *Il n'y a point d'homme pour celle qui* ' *aimè*; *ſon amant eſt plus, tous les autres ſont* ' *moins.*'

Montague now impatiently interrupted her—" You need not," ſaid he, " thus refine on the cruelty with which you tell me that you can never throw away a thought on me. I knew it before; and in the wildeſt paroxyſms of that paſſion which I glory in feeling and in cheriſhing, I never dared flatter myſelf that you would. Yet—perhaps even this fortunate Willoughby himſelf—this happy man, who may neglect you, leave you for another, and yet ſtill be beloved—is not more capable of an ardent, a ſincere affection, than I am. *If* he leaves you for ever—good God!—Even if he entirely deſerts you, you will ſtill love him—Even then no other would have any hope."

" None,"

"None," ſaid Celeſtina, "for then I will never marry. But, my good friend, this is an uneaſy ſubject to us both; let us then never reſume it. Allow me to offer you my friendſhip and my eſteem, and to aſſure you that this ſudden partiality, which believe me you will ſoon and eaſily conquer, is the only ſubject on which I cannot liſten to you with pleaſure."

They were now ſo immediately before the parlour windows, that Montague, who ſaw the family aſſembled there at tea, dared not give way to what he felt; but aſked her, in a lower voice, when ſhe went. She told him the day after the morrow. Again he ſighed; and when they got into the hall, turned towards his own little ſtudy, which was on the ſame floor, while Celeſtina went to join the party in the parlour; where ſhe found Mr. Bettenſon, who ſhe underſtood was now the profeſſed lover of Miſs Thorold; and ſo entirely did he now occupy the attention both of her and her mother, that they hardly noticed the entrance of Celeſtina. She took, however, the earlieſt opportunity of a pauſe in their converſation, to ſignify her deſign of going on the following Thurſday.

Miſs Thorold contented herſelf with coldly ſaying ſhe was ſorry to loſe her ſo ſoon; and her mother, even leſs civil, as her huſband was not by, ſaid—"And pray, Miſs De Mornay, where are you going?"

"To London, Madam."

"To London. Bleſs me! and pray who are you going to there?"

"To a Mrs. Elphinſtone, I believe, Ma'am."

"You

"You believe! and pray when do you go?"

"On Thurſday, Madam."

"And alone?"

"No, Madam."

"Not alone? then who do you go with?"

"With Mr. Cathcart, Madam."

"Oh! with Mr. Cathcart. And pray, how do you go? In the ſtage?"

"No, Madam," replied Celeſtina, bluſhing at the indelicacy with which all theſe queſtions were aſked before a ſtranger.

"How then, pray?"

"In poſt chaiſes, Madam."

"Humph! Poſt chaiſes are expenſive."—Here ſhe ſtopped; being unable to find any other queſtions, or rather not daring to aſk any more, as her huſband and eldeſt ſon that moment came in with Captain Muſgrave. Celeſtina however interpreted the look ſhe put on, as ſaying, "no matter how you go, ſo long as you do go," and again ſhe congratulated herſelf on the reſolution ſhe had taken.

CHAPTER III.

CELESTINA, finding that Montague Thorold did not join the party, conſtrained herſelf to ſtay with them, leſt it ſhould be imagined they were together. Captain Thorold, as if he took advantage of his brother's abſence, ſat down by her, and began in a half whiſper to make her ſome of thoſe ſpeeches, between a ſneer and a compliment, which always confuſed and diſtreſſed her. Soon after tea, however, Montague came in, and then, the evening being rainy, cards were propoſed, to which his mother deſired him to ſit down; while Celeſtina, ſaying ſhe had a few preparations to make for her journey which ſhe might as well begin in time, went away, nobody aſking her to take a ſeat at the card table.

She was no ſooner gone, than Mrs. Thorold, addreſſing her eldeſt ſon, ſaid—"So, Edmund, we are to loſe your father's viſitor at laſt, my dear."

"Are we?" ſaid he careleſsly. "What is her *intended* come back?"

"Oh no," replied his mother, "the young lady is going to London it ſeems."

"Lord, Ma'am," cried Bettenſon, "I'll tell you what Muſgrave and I heard t'other day; did'nt we Muzzy?"

"Faith I don't know whether we did or no, Jacky Boy, tell you me what it was we heard."

"Why we heard—Lord why 'twas that night we drank tea and ſupped, you know, with that there family of the Killigrews—we heard that Mr. Montague Thorold was a going to be married to this Miſs De Morning, and that Mr. What d'ye call him—he that was to have had her, had given Mr. Montague a living to take her off his hands."

Either the purport of this ſpeech, or the manner in which it was delivered, threw Captain Thorold and his friend Muſgrave into buriſts of laughter, which they very freely indulged; but poor Montague turned pale, and trembled with vexation; while Mrs. Thorold, purſing her mouth and drawing herſelf up, ſaid—"Pray, Mr. Bettenſon, *where* did you ſay you heard this ſtory? Pray, Edmund, what do you laugh at? I ſay—Mr. Bettenſon, pray was it at Mr. Killigrew's you heard this abſurd ſtory?"

"Lord yes, Ma'am, and upon my ſoul I've heard it elſewhere. Why, Muſgrave, don't you remember?—why half the people at Exeter I'm ſure have talked to me about it."

"I'm very ſorry for it," rejoined the old lady. "People give their tongues ſtrange liberties methinks. My ſon I can aſſure them will

will never, at leaſt with mine and his father's conſent, form any ſuch connection. What! with a foreigner! an alien as one may ſay! brought up upon charity, and I dare ſay not very honourably born, or how did Mrs. Willoughby get her ſo eaſily from her own country. People of faſhion don't part with their children to ſtrangers. For my part, I would be very civil to a young woman in diſtreſs, as 'twas Mr. Thorold's whim to have her here for a little time, but I am very ſorry it has given riſe to any ſuch report, which I beg the favour of you, gentlemen, to contradict. A living indeed! it is very likely that Montague Thorold ſhould accept of a living with ſuch an incumbrance, or on any ſuch conditions"

"But Madam," cried Captain Thorold as he dealt his cards, "what think you if poor Montague avows his penchant for the lady, and talks of dying without her inſtead of getting a living with her?"

"Think," replied his mother, reddening with anger—"why think that he is a fool, and that you are very little better for encouraging a ſilly boy in ſuch nonſenſe."

"Nay, Madam," cried the Captain, "I am ſure I don't encourage him. I was only pitying him, as one naturally does all gentle youths who are croſt in love."

Arabella, who knew that her mother ſometimes ſuddenly threw off her every day character to appear in one far leſs amiable, when unchecked by Mr. Thorold, now feared that ſhe might give way to one of theſe fits of ill humour

mour and exhibit a ſcene before Mr. Muſgrave and Mr. Bettenſon which might give them no very favourable idea of the family temper; ſhe therefore gave her brother Edmund a hint to forbear puſhing the converſation any farther. He deſiſted; the game went in favour of Mrs. Thorold; and in the pleaſure of winning five ſhillings, ſhe forgot for that time the diſpleaſure ſhe had conceived againſt her youngeſt ſon.

Celeſtina was in the mean time preparing for her journey. She had nothing now but her cloaths to pack up; for her books and her drawing caſes were at Alveſtone, where Cathcart beſought her to let them remain a little longer, promiſing that if events were finally determined otherwiſe than he was ſtill willing to hope, he would take them all from thence and ſend them to her whitherſoever ſhe might deſire. She wiſhed moſt earneſtly the next day over: for ſhe had now learned to dread more than before ſome extravagance on the part of Montague Thorold, for whom, notwithſtanding the trouble ſhe had received from his continual perſecutions, ſhe could not altogether withhold her pity and her eſteem. In his figure he reſembled his father, whom ſhe had ſo much reaſon to regard with grateful affection; and his faults were merely thoſe of youth and a vivid imagination. Whether his partiality to her was of a permanent or tranſitory nature, it was pretty certain that it now gave him pain, of which Celeſtina could not conſider herſelf as the cauſe without deſiring to alleviate or rather to end

end it. At ſupper, however, ſhe learned with great ſatisfaction, that Mr. Thorold and his two ſons were engaged out for the whole of the next day, and were to leave home early in the morning. She fancied, from ſeveral remarks ſhe made in the courſe of the evening, that this was purpoſely contrived: and the eyes of Montague, though he dared not otherwiſe ſpeak, told her how cruelly he ſuffered from an arrangement, which would deprive him of almoſt all the opportunities of ſpeaking to her which her ſhort ſtay might yet afford him. Though he ſaw that his mother remarked all his looks, and was reſtrained only by the fear of offending his father from openly avowing the anger ſhe had conceived, he could not forbear watching every turn of Celeſtina's countenance; and, when he bade her good night at the door, ſighing deeply and ſaying in a low whiſper—"At what time do you go on Thurſday?"

"Early, I hope," replied ſhe; and to avoid all farther queſtions haſtened away.

The next day paſſed quietly enough: for Mrs. Thorold, ſure of being delivered from a viſitor who had never been agreeable and was now uneaſy to her, thought it as well to be tolerably civil to her; and Arabella, who thought very little about any thing at preſent but ſecuring her conqueſt over the heart of Mr. Bettenton, was hardly conſcious that ſhe was with them.

Late in the evening the gentlemen returned; but Celeſtina had left the parlour before their arrival, on pretence of going early to bed that ſhe might

might be ready the next day for Mr. Cathcart, whom ſhe had appointed to meet her in a poſt chaiſe at ſix o'clock. She took leave of Mrs. Thorold and her daughter therefore this evening, who received her thanks and adieus with great formality and no kindneſs. Very willingly would ſhe have eſcaped bidding farewel to Montague Thorold the next morning, but ſhe feared it would be impoſſible: Mr. Thorold had told her he ſhould himſelf put her into the chaiſe; and he always roſe ſo early, that this, ſhe knew, would not put him out of his way.

As ſoon as her window was opened in the morning, which was almoſt as ſoon as it was light, ſhe ſaw Montague Thorold ſtanding under it. He kiſſed his hand to her when he perceived her, and looked ſo dejected that ſhe could not ſee him without concern. She was very ſoon dreſſed, and went down into the parlour, where he no ſooner ſaw her than he came to her.—"You are ready even before the time, ſo impatient are you to leave us," ſaid he in a mournful voice. "Ah! Miſs De Mornay! this houſe then will never again be bleſt with your preſence!"

"Indeed, Sir, I hope to ſee it very frequently again, and ſhall always be happy to hear of the health and welfare of its inhabitants. But is your father in his ſtudy? I muſt ſee him before I go."

"Do not, Celeſtina," ſaid Montague very gravely—"do not ſo induſtriouſly try to deprive me of this laſt poor moment. Yet a little and my unfortunate, my deſpiſed attachment will trouble you no more."

"You

"You are miſtaken, Mr. Montague," replied Celeſtina. "Any circumſtance that *you* have occaſion to deem unfortunate will trouble *me* long, wherever and whatever I may be: pray therefore, for my ſake as well as for your own, exert your excellent underſtanding, and conquer this unlucky partiality towards a perſon, who, whatever may be her ſenſe of your worth, or her gratitude for your good opinion, can never return it otherwiſe than by eſteem and good wiſhes."

"I would rather you would hate, deteſt, and drive me from you," cried he, ſtarting up and going to the window: "'twould be leſs cruel than this gentle reaſon, which I know to be juſt, but which I cannot obey: and yet indeed, Celeſtina, I have no hope: I am not quite frantic enough to ſuppoſe there can be any for me. All I aſk is to be permitted to be miſerable, and that, after all, you cannot prevent. Yet, there is yet another favour I would ſolicit, though I know—I know you will not grant it."

"Any thing I can do without impropriety," replied Celeſtina, "I certainly will do."

"I do not know," ſaid he, in a depreſſed and ſolemn voice, what *you* may call propriety or impropriety; but the favour I would ſolicit is to be allowed to write to you.—Nay don't interrupt me with a refuſal before you hear me ——to be allowed to write to you, ſo long as I confine my letters to literary ſubjects only, and that once or twice a year you would acknowledge the receipt of my letters."

"My

"My dear Sir," cried ſhe, ſmiling, "you would be weary of this project long before the firſt half year had elapſed. Had you never talked to me of I know not what particular regard, there might have been no impropriety in this, and I am ſure the pleaſure and advantage would have been wholly mine; but after the extravagantly gallant things you have ſaid, how can I——"

"If I infringe the articles of our agreement," ſaid he, "then ſend my letters back."

"But tell me," cried Celeſtina, interrupting him in her turn, "tell me what good can this poſſibly do you?"

"Good!" replied he: "you are not yourſelf inſenſible of a tender attachment to Willoughby, and yet aſk what *good* it can do to be admitted to write to a beloved object. Good! why it will be the ſoftener, the ſweetener of my exiſtence! While I am writing to you, I ſhall forget that I am never to ſee you—I ſhall forget every thing but the pleaſure of knowing that you will read what I am writing, that your hands will unfold my letter, your eyes paſs over the traces of my pen; that ſometimes I may amuſe or intereſt you, and at others, perhaps, raiſe in your boſom a compaſſionate ſigh for my ſilent, my unhappy love! Beſides, I ſhall by that means always know where you are.

"Soffti che in traccia almeno
"Di mia perduta pace
"Venga il penſier ſeguace
"Su l'orme del tuo piè.

"Sempre,

" Sempre, nel tuo cammino
" Sempre m'avrai vicino.
" E tu!——che ſai ſe mai
" Ti ſovverai di me!"†

Celeſtina had no time to anſwer this otherwiſe than by ſaying, that if he had ſagacity enough to find out where ſhe was he poſſeſſed more than ſhe did, who could not even gueſs where ſhe might be. He anſwered that he could alway know of Cathcart; and before ſhe could urge the many objections ſhe ſaw to his requeſt, the chaiſe, with Cathcart in it, drove up to the door, and at the ſame moment Mr. Thorold came to them. He appeared ſincerely concerned that ſhe was going from him; deſired her again to write to him; and while he was haſtening breakfaſt, which he inſiſted upon her taking before ſhe went, Vavaſour rode into the court yard, and giving his horſe to his ſervant, came into the room alſo.

Celeſtina, who knew that Cathcart had informed him of her reſolution to go, had felt ſome ſurpriſe that he had not called upon her the day before to expreſs his approbation, and enquire how ſhe intended to diſpoſe of herſelf: but he was ſo volatile and inconſiderate, that ſhe thought it not impoſſible but that he might have forgotten on Wedneſday what he ſo vehemently urged on Monday; and ſhe now rather wiſhed he had, as ſhe ſaw Mr. Thorold was very little pleaſed either with his preſent viſit, or the manner in which he addreſſed her, with-

† Metaſtaſio.

out

out taking either of him or his ſon quite ſo much notice as the laws of civility required.

Celeſtina had frequently remarked the extreme inattention and diſregard, which, as Vavaſour felt, he never choſe to take the trouble of concealing, for the opinions of thoſe to whom he was indifferent; and he was indifferent to three-fifths of the world, and not very ſolicitous about the reſt, unleſs for a few, a very few friends, whom he loved. He diſliked the Thorolds, without knowing or enquiring of himſelf why he diſliked them; and eager and ſolicitous only about Celeſtina, he hardly gave her time to addreſs herſelf to them, or returned their invitation to partake of their breakfaſt by the uſual ſpeech. A party who ſeemed ſo little pleaſed with each other, Celeſtina thought could not too ſoon ſeparate: ſhe therefore haſtily drank her tea, and telling Cathcart ſhe was ready, ſhe gave the elder Mr. Thorold her hand, and thanked him, not without emotion, for all the kindneſs he had ſhewn her: ſhe then wiſhed Montague Thorold health and happineſs, deſired him to offer her compliments and acknowledgments to his mother, ſiſter, and brother, and then Mr. Thorold leading her, and Montague walking ſilently on her left hand, ſhe went out and ſtepped into the chaiſe.

Cathcart followed her, and Vavaſour went round to ſpeak to her at the oppoſite ſide. "You did not wiſh me good morrow," ſaid he, "and therefore I ſuppoſe you foreſee that I intend going with you part of the way."

Celeſtina had no time to anſwer; for Mr. Thorold

Thorold offering his hand once more to bid her adieu, ſhe gave it him, ſaying—" Adieu! dear Sir; a thouſand and a thouſand thanks and good wiſhes." Montague, who ſtood by his father, at that moment caught her eye, and there was on his countenance an expreſſion of ſorrow which affected her ſo much, that under the ſudden impulſe of concern and pity ſhe held out to him the hand his father let go.—" Farewel, Mr. Montague," ſaid ſhe. He ſeized it eagerly, and held it as if he would never part from it more: but Cathcart at that moment bowing to the gentlemen and bidding the poſtillion drive on, he was compelled to releaſe it, though it was with a ſigh as if his heart was half broken; and when the chaiſe drove off, inſtead of following it with his eyes, he turned away and went into his own room, unable either to ſee Celeſtina go or Vavaſour following her.

The concern ſhe felt for him kept her ſilent the greateſt part of the way to the cottage near old Winnington's, where Jeſſy was to meet them. Cathcart, who was unhappy at the neceſſity of parting from his wife, was not diſpoſed to interrupt her; and though Vavaſour now and then rode up to the door of the chaiſe and talked, ſhe was not in ſpirits to anſwer the gay nothings with which he addreſſed her. The meeting with Jeſſy was more in uniſon with her feelings. Jeſſy threw herſelf into the arms of her benefactreſs, from whom ſhe had been ſo long divided, and who ſhe now ſaw only for a moment before they were to be ſeparated for a yet longer time. Neither of them could ſay much,

for

for their hearts were full: but had they been diſpoſed for converſation, Vavaſour, who felt only pleaſure in having got Celeſtina away from the Thorolds, was very little inclined to give them an opportunity: but in his rattling way rallied Jeſſy, and then Celeſtina, whom he teazed about Montague Thorold and his father, one of whom he called her pedant and the other her prieſt, till ſhe was half angry. Cathcart at length, however, prevailed upon him to leave the friends alone; and as they walked together before the door of the cottage, he enquired whether he had any commands in London. "Oh none, I thank you," replied Vavaſour, "for I ſhall be there myſelf almoſt as ſoon as you. Pray where does Miſs De Mornay intend to lodge?"

Cathcart declared himſelf entirely ignorant; and then, for the firſt time, from ſome expreſſion or look of Vavaſour's, he ſuddenly entertained a notion that there was ſomething more than friendly ſolicitude for Willoughby's betrothed wife in the eager and aſſiduous attentions of Vavaſour; and he determined from that time to remark more narrowly his behaviour to her.

"You do not intend to ſet out for London to day, Sir?" enquired Cathcart.

"Yes I do," anſwered Vavaſour: "that is, I juſt ride back and make my bow to thoſe honeſt humdrum Cranfields, and then I am off for Oakhampton, where I've told them I have buſineſs, and from thence I ſhall take four horſes, and ſo come up with you, my good fellow,

fellow, and your fair *compagnon du voyage*, before you reach Honiton."

"And does Miſs De Mornay know of your intentions, Sir?"

"No; for I know what ſcalping ſavages all the people about here are; and though there can be nothing you know in my attending her on behalf of Willoughby, yet on her account one would not ſet the clacks of the old cats within twenty miles round at work about it, and ſo I have made up a ſtory of having a lawyer to meet about the affairs of my deceaſed aunt, who, luckily for the honour of my veracity, had a farm or two near Oakhampton, which are now mine; and I intend the Cranfields, good matter of fact ſouls, ſhall fancy me carefully looking after my property and ſettling repairs and renewals with Mr. Palmer the attorney."

"You intend, no doubt, to tell Miſs De Mornay of it, however, Sir?"

"Oh! yes, now I ſee her ſafely out of the hands of her confeſſor, or elſe perhaps he would have put it into her head that I am not a fit eſcort for her; though I think, Cathcart, thou art ſo grave and ſage that thou'lt make as proper a third to our party as his reverence himſelf. Come never look ſo calamitous, but go and take leave of thy weeping wife, and let me and Celeſtina have a little converſation."

Cathcart then went into the houſe, and Celeſtina preſently afterwards came to Vavaſour, who continued walking before it. "Has Cathcart told you my plan?" ſaid he, before ſhe could

could ſpeak. "I intend to go to London with you from Honiton, where I ſhall be almoſt as ſoon as you."

Celeſtina now recollected all Mr. Thorold had ſaid to her; but the great friendſhip which had for ſo many years ſubſiſted between Vavaſour and Willoughby, and the undeſigning openneſs of Vavaſour's character, put all the ſuſpicions he had raiſed to flight, even when this ſcheme ſeemed moſt ſtrongly to corroborate thoſe ſuſpicions. "I had much rather you would not join us," ſaid Celeſtina, "becauſe, though I ſhould certainly be glad of your company as well as Mr. Cathcart, yet perhaps a thouſand ill natured things may be ſaid about it."

She was proceeding, when Vavaſour interrupted her. "Yes, that's juſt the politics you have learned at the Thorolds. What does it ſignify to you what any body ſays or thinks but Willoughby, and you know that he would put you himſelf into my protection on every occaſion where he could not protect you himſelf. Come, come, Celeſtina, acknowledge that your old Mentor has been warning you againſt having any acquaintance with ſuch ſad young rakes as Vavaſour."

"If you think ſo," replied Celeſtina, "you undoubtedly know that he has reaſon for his precaution; and as for his calling you what I always fancied you rather piqued yourſelf upon being, I don't ſee why my Mentor, as you term him, ſhould give you offence by that."

"Rake

"Rake as I am, however," anſwered he, "curſe me if I would do a diſhonourable thing towards George. No, by heaven, not if I were dying for love of you."

"I believe you indeed," ſaid Celeſtina; "and ſuch perfect confidence I have in your honour, that I ſhould truſt myſelf with you as with a brother."

"And never, you dear candid angel," interrupted he, "never ſhall you repent that confidence. But I tell you very plainly, that though I am upon honour with Willoughby I am not ſo with thoſe Thorolds, and can allow nobody elſe to uſurp that favour, which perhaps I might have taken it into my head to diſpute even with my friend George himſelf if he had not made out a very early and almoſt an hereditary claim to you: as it is, however, I have no pretenſions for myſelf, but I am confoundedly jealous for him; and now I have got you out of the way of that prating, piping, poetical pedant—that Montague Thorold, I ſhall be quite eaſy when I ſee you ſituated where you are not very likely to meet with him again: ſo you won't oppoſe my meeting you on the road; and, till then, my ſweet friend, adieu:" He then, without waiting for an anſwer, ran to his horſe, which his ſervant was leading about, and mounting it, was out of ſight in an inſtant. Cathcart and Jeſſy then came towards Celeſtina; and the latter hanging on her neck, could hardly prevail on herſelf to bid her farewel; while Celeſtina, melting into tears, kiſſed her, and willing to ſhorten a ſcene ſo uſeleſsly painful,

ſtepped

ſtepped into the chaiſe, where Cathcart, having taken again a tender leave of his wife, immediately followed her, and they took the road that led acroſs the commons to the turnpike.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IV.

THE road they were travelling led along the ſide of Alveſtone Park for near a mile and a half. Celeſtina had never paſſed it before, but on the day when Mr. Thorold had taken her to his houſe; and then ſhe had been ſo loſt in mournful contemplations as hardly to notice whither ſhe went. Now, however, the profound ſilence ſhe had fallen into on parting from Jeſſy, was ſuddenly broken by an exclamation; for on looking up, ſhe ſaw one of the park gates, and cried—"Alveſtone! is it not?—oh! yes, I ſee it is: there is the houſe!" Cathcart anſwered that it was; and after another ſhort ſilence, Celeſtina ſaid—"To any body but you, Cathcart, I ſhould be afraid of betraying my weakneſs; but you are now in place of a brother to me, and knowing my ſituation, will indulge my regret: I have a ſtrange fancy to get out and go up to that tuft of beech trees on the brow of the hill. It is not far. I'll not be gone long. Will you wait for me?"

"My time is your's," replied he. "But will you allow me to obſerve that it is perhaps wiſer to endeavour to conquer this uſeleſs regret than to indulge it?"

"I know it would be wiſer," anſwered Celeſtina: "but alas! we are not always able to be wiſe. I think I ſhall be eaſier when I have once more taken, of that ſpot where I have often been ſo happy—a laſt adieu!"

"Heaven forbid it ſhould be the laſt," cried Cathcart, as he aſſiſted her to leave the chaiſe. "I foreſee many, many happy days for you yet, when you will be miſtreſs of that houſe."

"Ah! dear Cathcart," returned Celeſtina, half ſmiling through the tears that filled her eyes, "how happy a convert ſhall I be to the doctrine of ſecond ſight if your prophecy ſhould ever be fulfilled. But no; I feel too certainly that this is the laſt time I ſhall ever behold this dear place."

She then went into the park over the ſtepping ſtile, and walking about half a quarter of a mile, reached the group of beech trees which ſhaded a high knoll in the park; from whence the houſe, half concealed by intervening wood, appeared to great advantage. It was now the beginning of May, and the trees under which ſhe ſtood were juſt coming into leaf, while others ſcattered over the park were many of them of the moſt vivid green, contraſted by the darker ſhade of fir and cypreſs mingled among them. One of the trees of this clump was marked by Willoughby with her name, his own, and his ſiſter's, and the date. It was five years ſince; and the bark had grown rough and knotted round the ſcars, but the letters ſtill remained. It was to re-viſit this well known memorial that Celeſtina had been anxious; and now ſhe could hardly

hardly bear the thoughts of leaving it. She recollected every trifling circumſtance that happened when Willoughby cut thoſe letters: the cloaths he wore, and his very look, were again preſent to her; while in the breeze that ſighed among the trees ſhe fancied ſhe heard the ſound of his voice, and that he pronounced the name of Celeſtina. In this ſtate of mind ſhe had almoſt forgotten that Cathcart waited for her; till a herd of deer ran bounding by her, and looking up, ſhe ſaw following them in mimic race, ſeveral horſes which grazed in the park. There was among them a favourite little mare, which Willoughby had been fond of from a boy: it had always carried him to Eton, and been the companion of all his boyiſh ſports; and when it became old, had been turned into the park in ſummer and carefully ſheltered in winter. While Mrs. Willoughby lived, it had been accuſtomed to be fed with bread once or twice a day from her hand, from her daughter's, or Celeſtina's; and ſince her death the old ſervants in the houſe, with whom it was a ſort of cotemporary, had accuſtomed it to the ſame indulgence; to which it had become ſo habituated, that on ſight of any of the family it went towards them to be fed. This creature therefore no ſooner ſaw Celeſtina's cloaths fluttering among the trees, than it left its companions, and came neighing towards her.

Celeſtina fancied the animal remembered her. She careſſed it fondly, and with tears in her eyes, and a deep ſigh, cried—"Ah! Fanchette, you recollect then your old friend, when perhaps

your ſtill beloved maſter is trying to forget her, and may already have ſucceeded but too well." She found herſelf too much affected with this idea, and turning her ſwimming eyes towards the houſe, the contraſt between what ſhe now was, and what, hardly a month ſince, ſhe expected to be—the fearful apprehenſion that Willoughby had ſuddenly become a convert to avarice and ambition, and that Miſs Fitz-Hayman, who had the power to gratify both thoſe paſſions, would ſoon poſſeſs the place where ſhe had fondly hoped to conſtitute the happineſs of *his* life whoſe happineſs was dearer to her than her own——all crouded with cruel force on her mind; and feeling her ſenſations become more and more painful, ſhe tore herſelf from the ſpot which had ſo forcibly preſented them, Fanchette ſtill following, and importuning her to be fed. She walked ſlowly towards the park gate, and ſaw Cathcart, who began to be uneaſy at her ſtay, coming to meet her. He underſtood the nature of her ſenſations too well to make any enquiries; but offering her his arm, in ſilence led her towards the chaiſe. Before ſhe aſcended the ſteps of the ſtile, ſhe turned once more to look at the horſe; kiſſed the ſenſible animal as it licked her hands; and pronouncing a half ſtifled and tremulous "adieu Fanchette!" ſhe got as haſtily as ſhe could into the chaiſe, and deſired Cathcart to order the poſtillion on quickly. "Since I muſt go," ſaid ſhe, "I would be ſoon out of ſight of this place, for I find I cannot bear it."

"I feared

"I feared indeed," replied Cathcart, "it would too much affect you."

Both then returned to their former ſilence; while Celeſtina, as her thoughts went back to paſt pleaſures, and as her heart felt all the bitterneſs of diſappointed hope, indulged herſelf without reſtraint in the ſad luxury of ſorrow. She no longer ſaw the objects ſhe paſſed, or thought of whither ſhe was going: but Alveſtone was ſtill preſent to her eyes, and ſhe ſaw Willoughby wandering among its ſhades as if looking for loſt happineſs, and returning diſcontented to his houſe; whence the ſullen magnificence and arrogant ſuperiority of his haughty heireſs had driven all domeſtic comfort. She heard him ſigh forth too late his regret, and lament that for advantages he could not enjoy, he had relinquiſhed the competence he might have poſſeſſed, with the tender attachment and grateful affection of his Celeſtina. Tears fell ſlowly down her cheeks as theſe diſtreſſing images preſented themſelves, and inſenſibly the tender adieu ſhe had taken of the place, the tender wiſhes ſhe had formed for the lamented friend and lover to whom it belonged, arranged themſelves into verſe, and produced the following

SONNET.

Farewel ye lawns! by fond remembrance bleſt,
As witneſſes of gay unclouded hours,
Where, to maternal friendſhip's boſom preſt,
My happy childhood paſt amid your bowers.
Ye Wood-walks wild! where leaves and fairy flowers
By Spring's luxuriant hand, are ſtrewn anew;

Rocks,

Rocks, whence with ſhadowy grace rude Nature lours
O'er glens and haunted ſtreams!——a long adieu!
—And you!—oh! promis'd *Happineſs!* whoſe voice
Deluded fancy heard in every grove,
Bidding this tender, truſting heart rejoice
In the bright proſpect of unfailing love:
Tho' loſt to me—ſtill may *thy* ſmile ſerene
Bleſs the dear Lord of this regretted ſcene.

This diſpoſition of mind, mournful as it was, afforded Celeſtina ſo much melancholy indulgence, that it was very reluctantly ſhe was rouſed from it by their reaching Honiton; where ſhe was glad to find Vavaſour not yet arrived: for though ſhe was ſenſible of the friendly intereſt he took in whatever related to her, and imputed it to no other motive than regard for Willoughby, and pity for her own ſituation, there was an impetuoſity in his manner, and a freedom in his diſcourſe, which, though it did not offend her becauſe ſhe knew it was his uſual way with every body, was yet often oppreſſive to her, and ſince Mr. Thorold's caution, had become more ſo than before. She obſerved too, that Cathcart was not pleaſed at his purpoſe of accompanying them to London, and had expreſſed more than once, in the little converſation they had together during their journey, his hope, that ſhe would find his ſiſter, Mrs. Elphinſtone, ſuch a companion as might engage her to continue with her. —Celeſtina, who was, perhaps, a little too faſtidious in the choice of her company, from having in her early years had her taſte ſet very high by Mrs. Willoughby, was become generally indifferent now, from the little expecta-

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tion ſhe formed of being gratified, and though her overcharged heart languiſhed for the ſoothing pleaſure of unburthening itſelf to ſuch a friend as the ſimple and ſenſible Jeſſy, ſhe knew it was very improbable that any one whom ſhe might meet ſhould replace her. She anſwered Cathcart, however, that ſhe doubted not Mrs. Elphinſtone's merit, ſince ſhe was his ſiſter, and was greatly prejudiced in her favour by Jeſſy's account of her. "But, my dear Sir," ſaid ſhe, "it is I who have the greateſt reaſon to doubt of my reception, and I have thought ſince, the plan we haſtily formed a very wild one. Mrs. Elphinſtone, occupied by her family, may have as little occaſion for a companion as taſte for an intruder into her domeſtic circle; and ſhe may perhaps, on your recommendation, accept, what her own inclination may be averſe to receive. Beſides ſhe has a huſband, of whom I know nothing, and to whom the preſence of a ſtranger, when he expects only his wife and family, may be diſagreeable. I own I have thought of a journey into the North with more pleaſure than any thing elſe can now give me, for it is the only part of this iſland I have not ſeen ſomething of, in thoſe ſummer excurſions which my dear Mrs. Willoughby was fond of making. But with whatever ſatisfaction my fancy has dwelt upon it, I ought not to think of it farther, at leaſt till I have ſeen your ſiſter."

Cathcart repeated again and again his aſſurances of the happineſs her company would beſtow on his ſiſter, and continued to lay plans for the accommodation of their journey: while Celeſtina

tina could not but think with internal anguiſh on her very forlorn ſituation, compelled to ſolicit the friendſhip and protection of ſtrangers, or remain alone, unfriended and unprotected. She bleſt, however, again the fortunate chance that had brought her acquainted with Jeſſy and Cathcart, without whom her condition would be yet more deſolate; and for once ſaw evidently the laſting good that had been produced by a tranſient evil, the troubleſome impertinence of Mr. Jedwyn.

As they arrived at Honiton ſooner than they expected, Celeſtina propoſed going on as far as Axminſter, nine miles farther, before they dined. To this Cathcart conſented; heſitating however a moment whether they ought not to wait for Vavaſour. Celeſtina ſeemed averſe to it, and ſaid if there was any rudeneſs in their going on without him, ſhe would herſelf be anſwerable for it.

They proceeded therefore to Axminſter, and were juſt ſet down to their dinner, when Vavaſour, at the expence of almoſt killing the four horſes which drew him, arrived.

His volatile humour never forſook him, and he ſeemed now unuſually diſpoſed to indulge it. He gave the moſt ludicrous account of the manner in which he had miſled the curioſity of Mrs. Cranfield, by ſetting out very gravely for Oakhampton; and then cried—"Oh! and I tell you who I met as I rode back to Cranfield's; your languiſhing lover, Montague Thorold, looking, poor dog! ſo diſtanced and ſo diſmal: he was compoſing, I fancy, an elegy on your departure,

departure, for I rode almoſt againſt him in the croſs lane that leads from old Thorold's grounds towards Cranfield Hall, and he had a paper in his hand, on which he was ſo intent that he did not ſee me, till I awakened him with a ho hoop! ho hoop! as if I had been in at the death. He ſtarted, and I was afraid, as I might have ſpoiled a thought, that he would feel ſome poetical indignation; but inſtead of that, he popped the paper into his boſom, as if he feared I ſhould have ſeized it; and then, with as much humility as if I had been the head of his college, he pulled off his hat, and profeſſing himſelf glad to ſee me, enquired where I had left you. I told him on your way to London, and that I was going back to Cranfield's; and we parted with the utmoſt politeneſs."

Celeſtina, who had really a friendſhip for Montague Thorold, could not hear of his anxious ſolicitude for her, without a mingled ſentiment of regard and concern, which, as her face expreſſed every emotion of her heart, was immediately perceived by the quick and penetrating eyes of Vavaſour. He did not ſpare her; but rallied her with more ſucceſs than politeneſs on the influence this college lad, for ſo he choſe to term him, had obtained over her. "Upon my word," ſaid he, "I ſhall think it neceſſary to put Willoughby upon his guard a little."

"And how do you know, Sir," anſwered Celeſtina, "that Mr. Willoughby will thank you for it? or, that admitting Mr Montague Thorold was really more to me than a common ac-

quaintance, which you do not ſeriouſly believe, how are you ſure that your friend would not be rather pleaſed, that the affections he may wiſh to be troubled with no more, are transferred to another?"

"Transferred!" exclaimed Vavaſour.—"You admit then that ſuch a transfer is probable?"

"Not probable at all: but certainly it would with moſt people be poſſible."

"And if it were with you, I am convinced that Montague Thorold is not the man to whom Willoughby would wiſh them to be transferred."

"He could, however, have very little pretençe, after having reſigned them himſelf, to dictate to whom they ſhould be given. But of what uſe, Mr. Vavaſour, is all this argument? Whether I ſhall ever ſee Willoughby again or no is very uncertain: but it is very certain that if I do not, I ſhall never marry at all."

Vavaſour ſaw he had gone too far; and Cathcart at that moment returning to them to ſay the chaiſes were ready, the converſation dropped for that time; Celeſtina peremptorily reſiſting the efforts Vavaſour made to induce her to go at leaſt the next ſtage, in the chaiſe with him.

They reached Dorcheſter that evening; and Celeſtina, after a ſlight ſupper, complained of being a good deal fatigued with her journey, and going as ſoon as ſhe could to her chamber, left the two gentlemen together.

Vavaſour, naturally unreſerved, even to indiſcretion,

diſcretion, and ſeldom taking the trouble to conceal his ſentiments, was totally off his guard when he had drank five or ſix glaſſes of wine; and ſince Willoughby, who alone had the power to reſtrain any of his exceſſes, had been leſs with him, he had accuſtomed himſelf to take more than double that quantity when he either dined or ſupped. Celeſtina was no ſooner gone therefore, than he ordered in another bottle of claret, and before it was finiſhed, he had told Cathcart without reſerve all that he thought. Taking occaſion to toaſt Celeſtina, he ſaid—"Tell me, Frank! what do you think of her? Is ſhe not a charming girl?"

"Moſt undoubtedly," replied Cathcart, ſhe appears ſo to me, who know that her very lovely perſon is the leaſt of her merit; to me, who owe her more than life, and who throughout mine ſhall have reaſon to bleſs the hour that firſt threw my Jeſſy in her way."

"Yes, by heaven," cried Vavaſour, "ſhe is an angel, and I cannot for my ſoul gueſs at this ſtrange myſterious buſineſs of George's leaving her: for though it is a deſperate undertaking for a man to marry at all, yet he had got over that, and doated upon her to a degree that I never imagined poſſible till I ſaw them together. I cannot underſtand it; and the more I think about it, the more incomprehenſible it becomes. Tell me, Cathcart, do you think he will now ever marry her?"

"My dear Sir," replied Cathcart, "I can only ſay with you, that the more I think, the leſs I comprehend of the affair."

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"I'll tell you, Frank: I am pretty well perſuaded that he never will marry her; nay, that he has made up his mind to tie himſelf to the fifteen thouſand a year, and the Viſcount's title, which are the appendages of his couſin: yet why, unleſs he had fully determined againſt all the temptations that match offered him—why carry matters ſo far with Celeſtina? and who the devil could thoſe two women be who it ſeems put the matter by and ſent him off in ſuch a hurry?"

"I never could find out," replied Cathcart. "He was himſelf the only perſon who knew, and of him, as he avoided all explanation, I could not enquire."

"What! did you never aſk whether they were young or old?"

"I aſked; but the people hardly ſaw their faces. They came in the evening, and went away in the middle of the night; but from the little information I could make out, neither of them appeared young."

"I ſhould have thought, (for you fellows that affect principle are not always to be depended upon,) that George had got into ſome ſilly ſcrape or other with ſome wench that he might have promiſed to marry: but any ſuch entanglement might have been eaſily got rid of, without his flying away from Celeſtina or even from his country. Well! there is no making it out: but I believe it is clear enough that Celeſtina will now never be *his* wife, and that being once aſcertained, Cathcart, do you know ſhe is the only

only woman upon earth whom I ſhall ever think of making mine?"

"Your's Sir!" exclaimed Cathcart.

"Aye, mine, Sir. I own tis rather extraordinary that even my divine Celeſtina ſhould make *me* meditate on matrimony; but ſuch a wonder was worthy of her only, and ſhe has effected it. I never was uneaſy half an hour in my life about any woman till I ſaw her at Alveſtone, or rather till I became acquainted with her; for I have ſeen perhaps handſomer women, or at leaſt thoſe that were at firſt view more ſtriking. Faith I found myſelf growing ſo curſed fooliſh about her, that ſuppoſing her then to be on the eve of marriage with my friend George, I thought it beſt to fly for it, and by going back to my old haunts—you know my way—I got her out of my head a little, and could have ſeen her Willoughby's wife cool enough; but the moment I heard he had left her, this confounded love, I ſuppoſe you call it, began to play the devil with me again, and I could not be eaſy, knowing the folks ſhe was with, without coming down to ſee after her. However Captain Thorold, (it was that puffing fellow I was moſt afraid of,) had not, I believe, the leaſt intereſt."

"Nor will any man have it, I fancy," replied Cathcart: "at leaſt I am ſure that nothing leſs than the certainty of Willoughby's marriage with another, would for a moment detach her from the invariable affection ſhe has for him. I even queſtion if that would make any alteration

tion in her heart, though it might in her proſpects."

"Pooh, pooh," cried Vavaſour, "you have not ſtudied women I find. Celeſtina has too much ſpirit and too much ſenſe to mope away her youth and beauty, and dwindle into the neglected uglineſs of ancient maidenhood, becauſe Willoughby did not know his own mind. Her pride, and ſhe is not without it, will help her to get the better of an attachment which will only be a ſource of mortification to her. No, no, let me be once ſure that Willoughby gives her up, and I don't think it very preſumptuous to ſay, that in a fortnight afterwards I carry her, to Ortney-bury, Mrs. Vavaſour."

"Till then, however, Sir," ſaid Cathcart —"till you are quite ſure that all is at an end between Mr. Willoughby and Miſs De Mornay, you will of courſe hold it a point of honour not to declare your intentions. It will diſtreſs her extremely if you do. For thinking of you as I know ſhe thinks, ſhe will conclude you are very certain that all ties are diſſolved between them, or you would not addreſs her in a way, which, while thoſe ties are undiſſolved, ſhe will call a breach of honour towards your friend."

"Aye, that's all very true," replied Vavaſour. "But let her take care then how ſhe ſhews a diſpoſition to favour that ſucking parſon —that Montague Thorold. Though I'm willing to allow Willoughby the preference, I am by no means diſpoſed to give the pas to ſuch a green horn as that: and to tell you the truth, Frank,

Frank, If I were ſure ſhe preferred him I might commit ſome d—d folly or other."

"Well, Sir," cried Cathcart, riſing to wiſh him good night, "ſhe is not likely to be in his way; and if ſhe were I am very certain Mr. Willoughby has nothing to fear from him; and as to yourſelf you know, you agree, that while *he* is in queſtion *you* are entirely out of it."

Cathcart then left him to finiſh another bottle alone, and carried with him no very agreeable reflections. Notwithſtanding all that had paſſed he could not diveſt himſelf of the hope of ſeeing Celeſtina united to Willoughby, whom alone he thought worthy of her. His own competence and happineſs, which they only had given him, would, he felt, be incomplete if both or either of them were unhappy; and unhappy he thought they muſt be if they lived not for each other. Whatever ſcheme therefore interfered with a union he ſo much deſired, he felt as a ſort of injury to himſelf; and though the extreme good humour, generous ſpirit, and gay temper of Vavaſour made it impoſſible to diſlike him, Cathcart was convinced, from the little he knew of his manner of life and his very free principles, that were Willoughby wholly ſet aſide, he was a man with whom the ſenſibility and purity of mind of Celeſtina would never allow her to be happy; he foreſaw, therefore nothing but uneaſineſs for her in his intended purſuit of her, and thought with redoubled anxiety of her ſituation.

As early the following morning as Vavaſour could be prevailed upon to move, they renew-

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ed their journey; and about ſix o'clock that evening, having taken leave of Vavaſour in Piccadilly, (who took Cathcart's directions, in order to be with them the next morning,) Celeſtina was ſet down at the lodgings Mrs. Elphinſtone had removed to in Suffolk-ſtreet, Charing Croſs.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER V.

CATHCART had given his ſiſter notice of the arrival of Celeſtina, and therefore the joy with which Mrs. Elphinſtone received her brother and the lovely perſon to whom he had been ſo much obliged, was unallayed by the ſurpriſe ſhe might have felt at the unexpected entrance of a ſtranger.

Celeſtina was extremely pleaſed with her new acquaintance, and very ſoon forgot that ſhe ſaw her for the firſt time. Her figure was very tall and thin, and would have had as much dignity as ſymmetry but that an habitual though ſlight ſtoop ſeemed to beſpeak oppreſſion of ſpirit and the weight of many ſorrows. Her face very much reſembled that of Cathcart; but the bloom of youth and the glow of health were gone: ſtill it was intereſting, though languid and faded. Her eyes were eminently beautiful; and there was an air of mild reſignation over her whole countenance particularly touching, which, even in her moſt cheerful moments, beſpoke her rather ſtudying how to bear the evils ſhe ſeemed to foreſee, than capable of enjoying the paſſing pleaſure. Sorrow had left on her expreſſive features marks of its cruel power, and had anticipated the hand of time: for though ſhe

ſhe was not yet thirty, ſhe appeared four or five years older; and her dreſs offered nothing to undeceive the imagination, for it was ſo plain that nothing but its extreme neatneſs and finer linen diſtinguiſhed her from women in the humbleſt rank of life. Her manners, however, would, in any dreſs or any ſituation of life, have marked her for a well educated woman; and her voice was particularly pleaſing to Celeſtina, who had been wearied by the harſh monotony of Mrs. Thorold or the affected liſp of her daughter.

Celeſtina had not been an hour in company with Mrs. Elphinſtone, before ſhe not only determined on going to Scotland with her if it were practicable, but felt ſo uneaſy in the fear of a diſappointment that ſhe wiſhed to have it immediately diſcuſſed. Cathcart, who eaſily underſtood her, then began to talk the matter over with his ſiſter, and found, that from the hint of it which he had before given her, ſhe had been aſſiduouſly removing every objection that could ariſe. She anſwered for Mr. Elphinſtone, whom Cathcart had before deſcribed to Celeſtina, as good natured even to a fault, and ſo fond of ſociety as to have owed great part of his misfortunes to a paſſion for it; and Celeſtina, willing to be convinced of what ſhe wiſhed to believe, no longer heſitated. Nothing then remained but to prepare for their departure, which was fixed to be at the diſtance of two days. Cathcart undertook every preparation; and having ſettled every thing as far as it could be that evening, he took leave of Celeſtina, for whom

whom Mrs. Elphinſtone had procured an apartment in the ſame houſe, and went to a coffee houſe, where he had beſpoke a bed, promiſing to be with them the next morning.

Celeſtina early on that morning aroſe to write the letter ſhe had long meditated to Willoughby. She was now able to give ſuch reaſons for her quitting Mr. Thorold as he could not diſapprove; and though he might perhaps think her preſent plan a ſtrange one, he would be eaſy, ſhe thought, in the reflection that it was attended with no perſonal danger and that ſhe was with Cathcart's ſiſter. One only objection now ſtruck her, and that was the length of time which muſt elapſe before ſhe could receive his letters: but on the other hand, if the ſtrange obſtacles to their meeting remained, it was uncertain whether he would write to her; and if they were removed, ſhe hoped that he would fly to her with equal eagerneſs whether ſhe was in Devonſhire or in the extreme parts of Scotland. She collected, therefore, every thing her tenderneſs ſuggeſted to make Willoughby eaſy about her if he ſtill loved her, and was ſhedding involuntary tears over that painful doubt, when, as ſhe had juſt concluded her letter, Vavaſour very abruptly entered the dining-room, where Mrs. Elphinſtone had not yet taken her ſeat, being detained by the care of her four children, whom ſhe attended to entirely herſelf.

Vavaſour entered with the gay confidence of a welcome viſitor; but was a little diſconcerted by the languid coldneſs with which Celeſtina received

received him, and by the air of melancholy ſhe aſſumed, and the traces of recent tears which he obſerved on her cheeks. He enquired if ſhe was not writing to Willoughby; and on her anſwering "yes," aſked her what ſhe had ſaid to him of her future intentions as to reſidence.

"I have told him," replied ſhe, "that I am going to Scotland."

"To Scotland! impoſſible! you are laughing at me."

"Indeed I am going to Scotland," ſaid ſhe; "and I thought you had known it."

"To Scotland! No, I imagined you would take lodgings either in London or its neighbourhood, and wait for letters from George, which muſt ſoon be here and be certainly deciſive."

"That is by no means certain," anſwered Celeſtina; "and whatever the purport of thoſe letters may be, I may hear it there as well as here."

Vavaſour now enquired more minutely into her plan; againſt which he firſt levelled his whole powers of ridicule, as being wild, romantic, unpleaſant, and productive of nothing but diſappointment and fatigue; but finding Celeſtina proof againſt all the ludicrous lights in which he could repreſent it, be became ſerious, and vehemently inveighed againſt the folly and hazard of a journey to the moſt deſolate and dreary country of Britain, to reſide with people whom ſhe did not know, and who were themſelves only adventurers on a wild

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and ſpeculative ſcheme that would probably be abortive. He repreſented very forcibly the diſcomforts ſhe muſt meet with, and the little pleaſure or knowledge which the view of ſuch a country could offer to counterbalance them: but ſhe was as indifferent to local circumſtances as to the ridicule of thoſe who would, he ſaid, laugh at her pilgrimage to the ſhrine of St. Columba; and he had exhauſted almoſt all his arguments without making any alteration in her reſolution, when the entrance of Mrs. Elphinſtone and Cathcart obliged him to deſiſt.

From their converſation he had the mortification of hearing that every thing would be ready for their journey the next day but one, and of finding that Cathcart never ſuppoſed he meant to object to any plan of Celeſtina's, who was entirely miſtreſs of her actions. Unuſed to any oppoſition, Vavaſour could hardly brook it, even from thoſe who were his equals; and though he had hitherto behaved to Cathcart as if he had conſidered him as ſuch, his ſpirit now revolted at what he thought the oppoſition of an inferior and a dependant. He became ſilent during breakfaſt, and was very evidently diſpleaſed; and as ſoon as he could he deſired Cathcart to walk with him for half an hour in the Park. He there remonſtrated very warmly againſt Celeſtina's going, and urged, among many other reaſons, the objections Willoughby would make to it. Cathcart, convinced from this converſation that it was neceſſary for her to be removed as far as poſſible from Vavaſour, kept his temper, and referred his impetuous opponent

nent to Celeſtina herſelf. He went back therefore to Mrs. Elphinſtone's lodgings to make another effort, but had the additional mortification of finding the ladies gone out to make purchaſes, and all his ſubſequent attempts that day to ſee them were abortive. The next, he attended very early at their door, and ſaw a chaiſe there, into which he found them almoſt inſtantly ſtepping, to dine at Richmond with an old relation of Mrs. Elphinſtone's and Cathcart's, of whom it was neceſſary for the former to take leave; and all Vavaſour's diſregard for forms could not authoriſe his intruding himſelf upon them there. He called in the evening in Suffolk-ſtreet, but they were not returned; and was there again at ten o'clock, and told they were gone to bed. At day break the next morning he propoſed to beſet the door, though almoſt hopeleſs now of detaining Celeſtina. The habits of life, however, he was accuſtomed to, and ſome additional wine drank the evening before to conquer his vexation, contributed to keep him long after day break from being on the watch; and on his arrival about ſeven o'clock, he learned from Cathcart, who was juſt ſetting out for Devonſhire with the two little girls and a ſervant he had hired to take care of them, that Celeſtina and his ſiſter had been gone above two hours, and were probably many miles on the North road. Vavaſour received this intelligence with indignation and reſentment, which Cathcart pretended not to obſerve; and buſying himſelf in placing his little girls in the chaiſe and ſettling their baggage, he in a few moments wiſhed Vavaſour a good morning,

ing and left him to curſe his deſtiny at his leiſure, which he did very liberally for ſome moments; and then determining to think no more of Celeſtina, he plunged, in order to forget her, into thoſe ſcenes where he was certainly not apprehenſive of meeting any body like her; and with a party he formed there, he went in a few days to Ortney-bury, his ſeat in Staffordſhire, where he tried to perſuade himſelf that he hated and deſpiſed all modeſt women, and never would give himſelf a moment's concern about one of that deſcription again.

Very differently did Montague Thorold ſuſtain the loſs of Celeſtina's company, and the cruel probability, amounting almoſt he believed to a certainty, that he ſhould never ſee her again. While he remained at his father's houſe, which was hardly a week after her quitting it, he fed his unhappy love by collecting many little memorials of her, which he preſerved as ſacred relics with all the fond idolatry of romantic paſſion. A cambrick handkerchief which ſhe had dropped, marked by her own hands and with her own hair, was one of the principal of theſe, and in it he conſtantly kept folded up the ſonnet, written with a pencil, which he ſteeped in milk to preſerve the letters from being eraſed; a card on which ſhe had ſketched a landſkape, and a profile which he attempted to make of her one evening by a ſhade, though his trembling hand and want of ſkill had deprived it of much reſemblance, were added to the packet which he thus wore in his boſom, and which he ſo delighted in contemplating, that he forgot

forgot all other claims upon his time; and regardleſs of what his family ſaid or thought, paſſed whole days alone in the fields, or when he was with them, was reſerved, ſilent, and reſtleſs.

Mr. Thorold ſaw all this with great concern, but ſtill flattered himſelf that abſence, and returning again to his ſtudies and his college friends, would inſenſibly wean him from the indulgence of a fruitleſs paſſion; and ſometimes he entertained a vague and diſtant hope that if Willoughby reſigned all pretenſions to the hand of Celeſtina, the merit and attachment of Montague might have a claim to her gratitude and her affection. But of this he gave not the moſt diſtant hint to his ſon, and parted with him without naming Celeſtina, or ſeeming to notice the ſtate of his mind in regard to her.

Celeſtina in the mean time was journeying towards Scotland with Mrs. Elphinſtone and her two little boys. As Cathcart had hired a chaiſe to carry them to Edinburgh, where Elphinſtone was to meet them, they travelled ſlowly; but as the weather was delightful, and her companion became every day more agreeable to her, Celeſtina was in no haſte to reach the end of her journey. Every thing in this part of England was new to her; and ſince the fatal hour of her ſeparation from Willoughby ſhe had never been ſo calm as ſhe now felt herſelf, though far enough from being happy. The oftener ſhe read over the letters ſhe had received from Willoughby, which were her conſtant companions, the more ſteadily ſhe reflected

flected on his principles and his character, more firmly she became persuaded that whatever was the cause of their separation, it was not owing to his preference of another, to idle caprice, or to any motive which should make her blush for his morals or his heart.

In this reliance on the honour of the man to whom her heart was fondly devoted, she found so much consolation, that she drove from her as resolutely as she could all those suspicions which had embittered her mind on the information Vavasour had given her. She thought it very possible that the Castlenorths *were* gone abroad, because Lord Castlenorth was never well in England; and his lady, of more consequence among the English in Italy than she could be in London or even at Castlenorth, was much fonder of being looked up to there, than in being lost in the crowd of those who were of equal or superior rank at home. Their daughter too affected foreign manners and foreign sentiments; and with the figure and countenance of a coarse English female peasant, assumed sometimes the animated vivacity of the Neapolitan beauty, and sometimes the insinuating languor of the Venetian; and when in England, had very frequently declared her dislike of the people and the country, and expressed her wonder that those who could converse in any other, should use the harsh and vulgar language of the English.

That a family thus disposed should not remain in their native country, and above all, after the mortification they must have met with from

Willoughby's rejection of their alliance, was not extraordinary; but Celeſtina endeavoured to perſuade herſelf, that though they were on the Continent it was with no intention of renewing their negociation with him, to which their pride would never ſuffer them to ſtoop; and that, though he ſhould meet them there, it would be on his part involuntary, and only as the nephew of Lord Caſtlenorth, by no means as the lover of his daughter.

Notwithſtanding all her arguments, however, and all her dependance on Willoughby's love and conſtancy, ſhe was ſometimes conſcious of returns of ſuſpicion and fear; and unable wholly to ſtifle the pangs ſhe then felt, ſhe endeavoured to think leſs of herſelf and more of others; and above all, to intereſt herſelf for Mrs. Elphinſtone, who ſeemed every hour more worthy of her regard.

In the courſe of their converſation ſhe found, that Mr. and Mrs. Elphinſtone, reduced as they had lately been in circumſtances, had once been in a very different ſituation of life; and ſhe could not reſiſt the inclination ſhe felt to learn what reverſe of fortune had thrown them into the diſtreſſed condition which Jeſſy had deſcribed to her, and which had made a deep and painful impreſſion on the generous ſenſibility of Celeſtina: but however her anxiety was excited, ſhe had ſo much delicacy as to avoid wounding her new friend by ſhewing it: unlike that very common deſcription of people, who love to enquire into the ſorrows and misfortunes of others, not with any view to relieve or even to ſoothe them,

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but merely to gratify an impertinent curioſity, and to riſe higher in their own idea by the compariſon, while they cry like the Phariſee—"Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, even as this publican."

To an heart ſuch as heaven had beſtowed on Celeſtina, there was ſomething in misfortune not only reſpectable but ſacred; and ſhe behaved towards Mrs. Elphinſtone with infinitely more attention than ſhe could ever prevail upon herſelf to ſhew to Mrs. Thorold, amid all her buſtle of affluence and her claims upon the veneration of the world from good dinners and rich connections.

Mrs. Elphinſtone, however, who was aware that Celeſtina knew part of her hiſtory, was very ſolicitous to relate to her the whole of it; conſcious that in her opinion ſhe ſhould loſe nothing, and that Celeſtina had in ſome meaſure a right to enquire into the life of a perſon to whom ſhe had given her confidence, and who was a candidate for her friendſhip and her eſteem. She waited therefore a fit opportunity the ſecond day of their journey to drop ſomething of her family; and ſeeing that Celeſtina wiſhed to know more, ſhe ſaid, ſmiling,—"It is ſomething like the perſonages with whom we are preſented in old romances, and who meet in foreſts and among rocks and recount their adventures; but do you know, my dear Miſs De Mornay, that I feel very much diſpoſed to enact ſuch a perſonage, and though it is but a painful ſubject, to relate to you my paſt life?"

"And do you know, dear Madam," replied Celeſtina, "that no wandering lady in romance had ever more inclination to loſe her own reflections in liſtening to the hiſtory of ſome friend who has by chance met her, loſt in the thorny labyrinth of uneaſy thoughts, than I have to liſten to you."

"Well then," rejoined Mrs. Elphinſtone, "you ſhall hear all that has befallen me, 'even from my girliſh days.' Mine has been a life, not marked, I think, with any thing very extraordinary but invariable ill fortune, which, though I could not eſcape it, I truſt I have ſuſtained with fortitude. But here," continued ſhe, pointing to her children, "here are my little ſupporters: without them, without feeling that they were a truſt committed to me by heaven, from my ſacred attention to which, no perſonal ſufferings, no care for myſelf, could exempt me even for a moment, I am afraid that I ſhould have tired long ago in the rude and various path I have trod. But my exordium will be longer than my hiſtory.

"My family are of Scottiſh origin. My father, one of its younger branches, was ſettled as a merchant in London, and was engaged in the American trade, by which he was making a reſpectable proviſion for his family, of three daughters and three ſons, of whom my dear Frank was the youngeſt, when the courſe of his buſineſs brought him acquainted with the family of Mr. Elphinſtone, who had poſſeſſions in the Weſt India iſlands.

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"The father of Mr. Elphinſtone inherited ſome of theſe from his family, but, of a greater part, became poſſeſſed by purchaſes made of lands in the iſlands ceded to England at the peace of 1762. They at firſt promiſed to anſwer his moſt ſanguine expectations; and on the ſtrength of thoſe promiſes he quitted the Weſt Indies, where he had lived many years on his own eſtate, and came to London, eſtabliſhing his houſehold in a ſtile of expence more ſuitable to his imaginary than his real fortune. His family conſiſted of a wife, who had never been in England before, and who brought with her all the pride ſhe had boundleſsly indulged in Antigua, five children, and as many negroes.

"A few years convinced Mr. Elphinſtone that he had reckoned ſomewhat too faſt on his annual income; but he was not diſpoſed to diminiſh the ſhewy and expenſive ſtile in which he firſt ſet out; and had he himſelf thought of it, the oppoſition he was ſure to meet with from his wife and children would have deterred him from any attempt to put a ſcheme of œconomy in practice.

"His daughters were moſt expenſively educated, and ſtill more expenſively dreſſed, their mother wiſely making a point of their being always the beſt dreſſed girls in the ſchool to which they were ſent, though among their ſchoolfellows there were many children of the nobility. The two boys were placed at Weſtminſter School, where the elder was ſoon diſtinguiſhed for having more money and leſs underſtanding than any boy of his age, and where the tyranni-

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cal diſpoſition which he had been ſuffered to exerciſe over the unfortunate black people among whom he had paſſed his childhood, broke out in ſo many inſtances, that he was as much hated for his overbearing temper as deſpiſed and laughed at for his ignorance and his vanity.

"The youngeſt, who is now my huſband, was in every thing the reverſe of his brother: open, good humoured, and undeſigning; too gay and careleſs to think, too quick to learn, which, however paradoxical it may ſound, is in many inſtances true—the boy who knows he he can learn in half an hour a taſk which another cannot conquer in a day, is very apt to let alone learning it till application becomes too late. Alexander Elphinſtone howevever was ſo much a favourite, that when he neglected to do his buſineſs, ſomebody or other was always willing to do it for him; and when his father took him from ſchool to place him at an academy where he as to be qualified for a merchant, he was as much regretted as his brother was deteſted, who had now acquired in the ſchool the name of 'Squire Squaſhy, which he never afterwards loſt.

"It was about the year 1770, that Mr. Elphinſtone, the father, in ſeeking for a counting houſe to place his youngeſt ſon, was introduced to my father. The pomp with which the old gentleman was ſurrounded, the high ſtyle in which he accuſtomed himſelf to talk, the detail of his eſtates, (though ſome of them brought him every year in debt,) his negroes, and his ſugar works, dazzled my father's eyes, who had been accuſtomed only to a plainer ſtile of life, and leſs

leſs flattering views of profit. He was pleaſed with the thoughts of taking into his counting houſe the ſon of a man ſo opulent; and when he ſaw the young gentleman himſelf, was immediately prejudiced in his favour. Elphinſtone was then a tall boy of ſixteen: his dark complexion was enlivened by black eyes full of ſpirit and vivacity; and his countenance, if not handſome, was expreſſive of an open and ingenuous mind. The premium which my father aſked was agreed to, and young Elphinſtone became one of our family, which conſiſted of my father, his ſecond wife, by whom he had no children, my two ſiſters, and myſelf; for of my three brothers, one was placed at the Temple, another was gone to the Eaſt Indies, and the youngeſt, my dear Frank, was then at ſchool.

"My mother in-law was one of thoſe common characters which are ſo difficult to deſcribe unleſs it be by negatives. She was not ill natured; ſhe was not a woman of underſtanding; ſhe was not handſome; ſhe was not young; ſhe was not well born or well educated: but my father, who had married her to take care of his family, and to put the three thouſand pounds ſhe poſſeſſed into his buſineſs, was well enough contented to ſee that ſhe did not behave ill to his children, that ſhe brought him no more, and that ſhe had always a plain dinner ready for him when he came from 'Change; was ſatisfied with going on a Saturday to a country houſe at Clapton, near Hackney, and receiving the viſits of the wives and daughters of traders like himſelf; and had been brought up with no higher ideas

ideas of elegance than what were anſwered by their ſociety, or fancied any ſuperior entertainment was to be found than what ſhe enjoyed in the front boxes at a play twice a year, or in a Chriſtmas attendance at Hackney Aſſembly.

" It is true that on theſe occaſions ſhe loved to be fine, to wear rich ſilks and good lace, to clean and exhibit her mother's roſe-diamond ear rings, and to wear my father's picture by way of bracelet, faſtened by garnets on her comfortable round arm. But theſe were indulgences about which he never contended; and was rather pleaſed that Mrs. and the Miſs Cathcarts began to be conſidered as people of ſome conſequence in the circle in which they moved, while he gradually obtained in the city the name of a warm man.

" I was not more than eleven years old when Mr. Elphinſtone became a member of our family. One of my ſiſters was four years older, and the other a year younger; but my eldeſt ſiſter, at about the age of ſeventeen, was married to a young Weſt Indian of whom my father had the care, and went with him to ſettle in Barbadoes. My ſiſter Emily and I grew up to conſider Elphinſtone as our brother; but I ſoon learned to think of him with particular partiality, and to grieve at the frequent occaſions which my father had to complain of him. He was wild, eccentric, and ungovernable: ſometimes rode away to races when he ought to have been ſettling with the grocers, (for my father was now deeply engaged in the Weſt India trade,) and ſometimes got into ſcrapes with his old ſchoolfellows, and

and was found at the watch-houſe inſtead of the counting houſe; or if he attended thoſe ſolemn meetings at which the price of freight or the quality of Oſnaburghs was diſcuſſed, he turned the venerable perſons of the old merchants and grocers into ridicule; and while they thought he was making calculations, was frequently drawing caricatures of them in all their majeſty of wig, upon the leaves of his memorandum book. But with all this, he was ſo capable of buſineſs, ſo ready with his pen, and ſo perfectly maſter of accounts, that my father often ſaid he could do more buſineſs in an hour than he himſelf could do in three; and that if once he became ſteady, he would make a great figure as a merchant.

"His father, the elder Mr. Elphinſtone, found it convenient, after his ſon had been with us a year or two, to cultivate very aſſiduouſly an acquaintance with our family. Mrs. Elphinſtone, who had reluctantly conſented that her youngeſt ſon ſhould be brought up a merchant, now condeſcended to viſit us, and in her drawling way to attempt civility. The Miſs Elphinſtones were directed to forget the diſtance between Cavendiſh-ſquare and Mincing-lane, and to viſit us often; while we were of courſe mightily delighted to receive invitations to their routs, and to be admitted to add to the croud which four or five times in a winter filled their rooms in Cavendiſh-ſquare.

"Inſenſibly my good mother-in-law acquired a taſte for what was then called the other end of the town; and no longer contented with the gratifications of Haberdaſher's Hall, or the

Crown and Anchor, which had once been the utmoſt limits of her ambition, ſhe learned to ſigh for the Soho Aſſembly, for five and twenty tables, and the company of 'titled Dowagers and Yellow Admirals.'

"If this unfortunate mania ſeized her, it was not wonderful that it extended itſelf to us. Emily had a very fine voice, and the Miſs Elphinſtones had concerts to which ſhe was invited. We both had learned among ourſelves to act parts of plays; the Miſs Elphinſtones had at their houſe at Ealing a private theatre, and we were promoted to parts in their drama. Looking upon us as inferior to them in our perſons, in our education, in our family and in our fortunes, no idea of rivalry ever diſturbed this intercourſe, and inſenſibly we paſſed more time with them than we did at home; whither I ſhould always have returned with murmurs and regret, if it had not been the only place where I could meet young Elphinſtone without witneſſes, the only place where ſome folly of the moment did not ſeem to make him forget the preference he profeſſed to give me.

"Such was the ſituation of the two families, when the eldeſt ſon of the Elphinſtone's, the gentleman who had been diſtinguiſhed at Weſtminſter by the appellation of 'Squire Squaſhy, arrived from a twelvemonth's tour in France and Italy, and with him a ſort of tutor who had been ſent with him at a very exorbitant ſalary. To all the native arrogance and invincible ſtupidity of his original character, this elder brother had added the pertneſs of fancied knowledge

ledge and the conſciouſneſs of travelled ſuperiority; a more diſguſting character could hardly be imagined. He was now not only above all the reſt of the world, but infinitely above his own family: his mother was ſilenced by—"Good Madam! how is it poſſible *you* ſhould know?" his father, by a ſilent ſhrug of contempt and a diſdain of argument; while his ſiſters, who piqued themſelves upon their elegance and faſhion, were ridiculed for being *ſi bourgeoiſe*, that they were hardly within the poſſibility of being made *comme il faut*. As to my ſiſter and myſelf, who were with them when he arrived, he looked at us once through his opera glaſs, enquired who we were, and hearing we were the daughters of his father's merchant and lived in the city, he never, on any occaſion that I can recollect, deigned to notice us again. Unhappily, the gentleman who had travelled and who ſtill continued with him, ſaw with different eyes my poor little Emily, then not quite fifteen: he affected to be highly pleaſed with her ſinging, and undertook to give her inſtructions. He would teach us both French, and corrected our acting. We were invited to paſs two months at Ealing, at a houſe which Mr. Elphinſtone rented, and to which his daughters had given the name of Cypreſs Grove, though not a cypreſs higher than a gooſeberry-buſh was near it; and there we were to act plays: in which, though the elder hope of the family declined taking a part and abſented himſelf from the ſet entirely, his travelling friend, whoſe name was Beresford,

was

was of great conſequence; and Alexander Elphinſtone was permitted by my father to quit, on thoſe occaſions, the high counting ſtool and ſharp deſk for the throne of King Pyrrhus, or the triumphal car of his nameſake Alexander.

"I will own, that young as I then was, being not quite ſixteen, my childiſh heart was enchanted with theſe amuſements, eſpecially when *he* bore a part in them to whom that heart was already ſo fondly attached. Unſuſpecting and artleſs, I dreamed not of the miſchief which lurked under all this feſtive pleaſure; and incapable of thinking for myſelf, I was a very inſufficient guard to my ſiſter, who was ſtill younger and more thoughtleſs; yet to me was ſhe entruſted; unleſs, which did not very often happen, my mother left the card table to be a ſpectator of the amuſements of the younger part of the company.

"Emily, however, was always with me; but it is true that young Elphinſtone was always with me too, and in liſtening to him, I heard not or attended not to the more dangerous converſation with which Mr. Beresford entertained my ſiſter. He contrived moſt artfully to put her upon her guard againſt all confidence, which he knew muſt ruin his ſcheme; and the firſt idea I had of my poor Emily's misfortune, was, when on awaking one morning I found ſhe was already riſen, contrary to her uſual cuſtom. I was not, however, alarmed, till, on beginning to dreſs myſelf, I found the drawers where we kept our cloaths were emptied of every thing of her's: even then I had only a confuſed idea

of

of what had happened, 'till, in looking wildly round the room, I ſaw a note upon the table, which I opened in trembling aſtoniſhment, and read thus:

MY DEAR SISTER,

"To avoid any arguments in regard to a "ſtep I was determined to take, I have ſaid "nothing to you that I meant to leave you. I "hope you will forgive it: and aſſure yourſelf "I am ſafe, and in the care of a man of ſtrict "honour, who will himſelf write to my father; "and I do not know that I am accountable to "any body elſe but to him for my actions. "You ſhall hear of me ſoon; when I ſhall "have exchanged the name of Emily Cathcart "for that of your ſtill affectionate ſiſter, Emily "Beresford."

"My ideas were at once ſo painful and ſo confuſed, that I loſt all recollection for a moment, and running down ſtairs half dreſſed as I was, I aſked in breathleſs agitation for my ſiſter—my ſiſter Emily! The ſervants who were up, (for it was yet early morning,) ſtared at me without comprehending my diſtreſs; and I found nobody diſpoſed to attend to me till the younger Elphinſtone met me and eagerly enquired what was the matter. I put the note I held into his hand, ſat down in the ſeat of a window, and burſt into tears. He ſaw in a moment what my ignorance of the world had in ſome meaſure concealed from me; and knowing that Beresford was the laſt man in the world likely to marry, he

he knew that Emily was loſt. Neither my father or his wife were then at Ealing; and he pauſed a moment on what could be done.

"He then endeavoured to conſole and reaſſure me, and went to his father and his mother to inform them of what had happened. The old gentleman came to me in a few moments, adviſed me to go immediately home and acquaint my parents, and ſent a ſervant for a poſt chaiſe, in which he ſaid his younger ſon ſhould attend me. I hardly know how I left the houſe; but I remember Mrs. Elphinſtone did not appear, and that the young ladies expreſſed none of that concern which I thought I ſhould have felt for the reſt, had any one of them diſappeared under circumſtances ſo prejudicial to their fame."

The travellers now arrived at Stilton, where they were to reſt that night. It was late, and Mrs. Elphinſtone appearing a good deal fatigued, Celeſtina beſought her to delay any farther gratification of her curioſity till the next day. She then aſſiſted her friend in giving her children their ſupper and putting them to bed; and after a ſhort repaſt together, they retired to reſt in two beds in the ſame room, where the children were already aſleep.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VI.

THE following day they proceeded early on their journey, and Mrs. Elphinſtone thus reaſſumed her narrative.—"In our way from Ealing to London, Alexander Elphinſtone endeavoured by every argument in his power to ſtrengthen my reſolution, and calm thoſe fears I expreſſed at meeting with my father and mother; who would, I apprehended, be enraged againſt me for a misfortune they had themſelves taken no pains to prevent. This dreadful meeting muſt however be hazarded: I tottered as well as I was able into the dining-room, and ſending for my father out of his counting-houſe, I put into his hands the fatal note, and informed him as well as I could of what had happened. He was too reaſonable to blame me for an error he had as little foreſeen himſelf; but haſtening out of the room with Elphinſtone, enquired, as I afterwards learned, whether he thought Beresford meant to marry my ſiſter? Elphinſtone, with ſome heſitation, anſwered that he feared not. 'Let us then,' ſaid he, 'endeavour 'to find her, and if it be poſſible, huſh up this 'unhappy affair before it becomes more known.'

"Elphinſtone moſt willingly agreed to aſſiſt him in the ſearch, and my elder brother was ſent

ſent for from the Temple for the ſame purpoſe. *His* anger and indignation were much more turbulent than my father's. He vowed vengeance againſt Beresford, and ſet out in purſuit of him in ſuch a temper of mind as made me dread the conſequence ſhould he find him.

" To find him, however, every effort proved abortive. Among other places, my Mr. Elphinſtone went to enquire for him at the lodgings his elder brother had taken in Piccadilly. The 'Squire received him with that contemptuous coldneſs which he thought was all he owed to a merchant's clerk; and upon his eager enquiry after Beresford, and learning the reaſon of it, he ſaid — ' What a fuſs is here, indeed, ' about a little griſette: why, one would think ' Beresford had carried off an heireſs. Let ' him alone, and I dare ſay he will bring her ' back again.' His brother, enraged at this inſult, ſpoke to him very freely, which he returned no otherwiſe than by calling him quill-driver, and maccaroni of Mincing-lane. The brothers parted in wrath; and the younger returned home lamenting his fruitleſs ſearch, and deviſing new meaſures for the next day. Theſe however, were equally ſucceſsleſs. Poor Emily was loſt to us for ever; and the feeble hope that Beresford might have married her every day became fainter.

" This unhappy affair put an end to our intercourſe with the Elphinſtone family, and was indeed the firſt ſignal of a long long ſeries of calamities. I obſerved that my father grew extremely uneaſy at ſomething that related to the ſituation

ſituation of his affairs: he began to complain that Mr. Elphinſtone's remittances fell very ſhort of what he expected; that he was paid no intereſt for the large ſums he had advanced for him; and while he was deliberating how to get out of the difficulties theſe circumſtances threw him into, he received information, that Mr. Elphinſtone, deeply involved before, had been overwhelmed by the expences of his eldeſt ſon, and the failure of his remittances, had gone off in the night from his houſe at Ealing to Falmouth, whence he had embarked in the packet for Antigua; while his lady and family had ſhut up their houſes at Ealing and in Cavendiſh-ſquare, and were gone to Bath.

"Theſe terrible tidings fell on my father like a ſtroke of thunder, and for ſome time he was unable to attempt applying any remedy to the evils he ſaw gathering around him. But from the torpor of immediate anguiſh, he was rouſed by the preſſing demands of thoſe, of whom he had on his own ſecurity borrowed money for the ſupply of Mr. Elphinſtone. It was at a ſeaſon when many months were to intervene before he could receive any remittances from his correſpondent, even if his correſpondent ſhould have honour enough to ſend them, and bankruptcy and ruin ſeemed inevitable. He had however, as he thought, a friend in a very eminent banker, who a few months before, on his engaging ſo largely with Mr. Elphinſtone, had heard ſome report that that gentleman, had influenced him in favour of the banker with whom *he* was connected; on which my father's friend,

friend, a man of immenſe property, had then written to him thus—

" MY DEAR SIR,

" The intimation I have this day received of " your connection about to be formed with " Mr. Elphinſtone, is the occaſion of this addreſs.

" It would be injurious to that friendſhip " you ſo conſtantly profeſſed towards me, to " doubt a moment, that, to have an occaſion " of ſerving me, would be a real pleaſure to " your good ſelf. From a converſation between " Mr. Elphinſtone and my brother Peter, (who " were acquainted by meeting at the houſe of " Sibley and Co.) I am very apprehenſive we " run the riſk of loſing a connection ſo pleaſing " to me, by *his* influence and inclination to " another houſe. Upon your friendſhip, dear " Sir, I rely to ſave me from ſo great a morti- " fication and concern: as I flattered myſelf " the connection between your houſe and ours, " was formed for many many years. Let your " goodneſs towards me, therefore, prevent your " other connections from breaking it; and I " hope your friendſhip for me admits of no " diminution, as mine towards you never will " aſſuredly. My very beſt and ſincereſt wiſhes " *waits* in the mean time on worthy Mrs. " Cathcart, your good ſelf, and every member " of your amiable family, who am,

" my dear Sir,
" your moſt ſincere
" and faithful friend,
" and obliged humble ſervant,
" TIMOTHY HEAVYLAND."

" *London, Jan.* 30, 17—.

To

To this *affectionate* and *ſincere* gentleman (whom my father had inſtantly obliged in dropping all thoughts of complying with Elphinſtone's requeſt,) he now wrote; and deſcribing with great ſimplicity his preſent embarraſſment, which he hoped would be only temporary, beſought him to advance him five hundred pounds for the preſent demands of tradeſmen, till remittances came in, and till he could obtain aſſiſtance from his other friends: to which he received the following anſwer—

"SIR,

"Your's is come to hand. Our houſe, on "making up your book, find they have already "advanced you 216l. 18s. 2¼d. above your "credit. We hoped you would have made "this up by payments forthwith, inſtead of "aſking a loan; are ſorry it is not in our power "to comply therewith. I cannot take upon "myſelf to adviſe them thereto, as I find my-"ſelf blamed for being the occaſion of the "preſent advance, and, that our houſe are un-"eaſy at the non-payment thereof. Hope you "will think immediately of replacing it; and "will oblige thereby,

"Sir,

"your humble ſervant,

"TIMOTHY HEAVYLAND."

"The eyes of my poor father were now compleatly opened, and all the horrors of his fate were before him. Young Elphinſtone, ſtill ſanguine as to his father's property and his father's honour,

honour, was on this occaſion his great reſource. He was indefatigable in ſtemming the torrent of ill-fortune thus brought upon us; and ſucceeded ſo well by various expedients, as to ſupport for a while the ſinking credit of the houſe: but ſeeing my father become every day more and more anxious, and doubtful about the elder Mr. Elphinſtone, he propoſed to go over to Antigua himſelf; and to this propoſal added, that of marrying me and taking me with him. My father, who found his health giving way under the accumulated calamities that had lately befallen him, now thought it better to accept this propoſal, and by a union of families make it Mr. Elphinſtone's intereſt to be juſt. We were married then, after a reluctant conſent wrung from the haughty Mother of my lover, and three weeks afterwards embarked for the Weſt Indies.

"I was not yet old enough to conſider the ſituation of our fortune with any great concern: but I parted from my own father with a ſad preſentiment that we were to meet no more, and I dreaded my introduction to the father of my huſband. But I loved *him*; he was the moſt cheerful and ſanguine creature in the world; and painted to me only ſcenes of proſperity and happineſs, which I was well pleaſed to contemplate as true repreſentations. Gracious heaven! could I *then* have foreſeen all the miſery that was in ſtore for me, how ſhould I have ſhrunk from a deſtiny ſo inſupportable! how ſhould I have wiſhed that in a violent ſtorm we met in the Bay of Biſcay, we might periſh.

"We

"We arrived, however, after a tedious paſſage, at Antigua; and I was relieved from the diſcomforts of a long voyage, to encounter, as I believed, what I dreaded more—the diſdain and rudeneſs of my father in law. I landed, trembling with this apprehenſion, diſguſted with every thing I ſaw, and overcome with heat and ſickneſs: but the firſt intelligence we heard was, that Mr. Elphinſtone had been dead about a week of an epidemical diſtemper, and that his houſes and plantations were in the poſſeſſion of the agents of his eldeſt ſon.

"It was in vain that my huſband deſired to be admitted to reſide on one of them till he could ſee into his father's affairs: the people who had been placed there refuſed him any ſatisfaction; and it was only by applying to the Governor that he at length obtained a ſight of the will, by which he found that his father had left every thing to his elder brother, and an annuity to his mother of eight hundred a year; with five thouſand pounds, to each of his daughters and to his youngeſt ſon: but as the eſtates were not charged with theſe laſt legacies, nor able to pay them if it had, his nominal fortune gave him but little comfort, nor alleviated the concern with which he ſaw too evidently that all the ſums of money lent by *my* father to *his*, were entirely loſt.

"The pain this gave him, the inceſſant fatigue to which he expoſed himſelf in going to Granada and St. Vincents, where his father had made purchaſes, at length overcame the natural ſtrength of his conſtitution. After we had been

been about four months in the Weſt Indies, living with his friends, he was ſeized at Granada with one of thoſe fevers ſo common in that climate. An old French lady, who lived on her own eſtate near the lonely habitation where he was taken ill, had pity upon him, took him to her houſe, and by her extraordinary care carried him through the diſorder: but he was very long in a ſtate of infantine weakneſs, and could articulate nothing but a requeſt that he might ſee his wife. It was ſome time before I received intelligence of his ſituation, and ſome time longer before I could get to him. The kindneſs of our foreign friend did not ſtop there: I was now in a ſtate which excited her generous compaſſion towards me, and ſhe inſiſted, that inſtead of returning to Europe in a ſituation ſo unfit for a voyage, I ſhould ſtay with her, till the birth of my child.

" Poor Elphinſtone's weak condition of health indeed, rendered ſuch a voyage as impracticable for him as for me. We accepted therefore the generous hoſpitality of Madame Du Moulinet, and at her houſe in Granada my eldeſt child was born.

" During the five months we remained there, we heard that the elder brother was come over himſelf to Antigua and had taken poſſeſſion of every thing. We had therefore no buſineſs to go back, where we had no authority nor indeed any proviſion; but as ſoon as our hoſteſs would give us leave, embarked again, to return to England more deſtitute than we had left it, and

and with a little unfortunate baby to ſhare our diſtreſſes.

"We arrived there, after an abſence of thirteen months; and haſtened to London as cheaply as we could, for we had very little money. My poor Elphinſtone left me at the inn where we ſtopped, and went to my father's houſe. Never ſhall I forget the look with which he returned to me: his bloodleſs cheeks, his wild eyes, his trembling lips, ſpoke before he could utter a ſyllable. He ſat down; looked earneſtly on me a moment, then on his child, which was ſleeping in my arms, ſtarted up, ran from us, ſtaggered towards the wainſcot, and fell.

"My ſcreams brought the people of the inn into our miſerable room. They took up the unhappy young man, and gave him what aſſiſtance they could, ſuppoſing that he had fallen into a fit. After a moment he recovered his ſpeech, and entreating to be left alone with me, told me that my father was dead inſolvent, all his effects ſold, and my mother in law gone to reſide with her relations in the North: 'and 'tis I have undone thee, my Sophy,' cried he; —'tis I and my family who have reduced thee 'to beggary, and now I have not a place 'wherein to ſhelter thee and this dear hapleſs 'innocent.'

"Agony now choaked his utterance; and all my reſolution was neceſſary to prevent his relapſing into the ſtate he had juſt recovered from. Stifling therefore my own anguiſh, I beſought him to take courage; declared that I feared nothing

nothing while he was with me and well, and urged him to think of ſome place where we might paſs the night and recover courage to encounter what was before us.

" He ſeemed comforted by my calmneſs, and recollected an old ſervant of his father's who kept a lodging houſe in Northumberland-ſtreet. Thither we determined to go; the man was gone from thence, but ſome other people who let lodgings now inhabited the houſe: they had a bed chamber on the ſecond floor to let; and knowing ſomething of us, took us in.

" Fatigue of body overcame for a ſhort time the agony of mind my poor huſband had felt. He was aſleep by me; my infant was at my breaſt; but *I* could not ſleep; all the horrors of poverty were before me, and my agitated ſpirit ran over every hope which yet remained for us, but reſted ſecurely on none.

" The morning at laſt came; and I now deſired Elphinſtone to enquire out my eldeſt brother, who when we went away had chambers in the Temple; and to diſcover what was become of my dear Frank, whom we had left at ſchool, and to whom I was always fondly attached. Poor Emily too recurred to me, but for her, alas! I dared not enquire.

" He went out, therefore, after breakfaſt, and returned in about an hour with looks that gave me no favourable impreſſion of his ſucceſs. My eldeſt brother, he told me, had left his chambers, and had been married ſome months to a young woman of ſome fortune, at leaſt in expectancy, being the only child of her parents, with

with whom they lived; and that her father, an attorney of practice in Warwick-court, Holborn, had taken my brother into his buſineſs. 'I ſaw him, however,' ſaid Ephinſtone; 'but 'he received me ſo coldly that I ſhall hardly re-'peat the viſit.'

"My heart ſunk cold within me, and I had hardly courage to aſk what was become of Frank."

'He is at I know not what academy,' replied Elphinſtone. 'Your brother John told me, 'very coolly, that though he was ſo lucky as 'have a proviſion by marriage himſelf, it was 'out of his power to provide for all his father's 'family; and thought it quite enough, that he 'had been at ſo much expence for Frank, who 'muſt now,' ſaid he, 'do ſomething for him-'ſelf, for I cannot undertake to pay his ſchool-'ing another year: and you, Sir, as it is ow-'ing to your family that my father was ruined, 'I hope you will now take this burthen off my 'hands; for my wife's family are very much 'diſcontented at my bearing it.'

'Gracious God!' cried I, 'what will become 'of us! Oh, my poor baby! why wert thou 'ever born!'

'To embitter our calamities,' cried Elphinſtone. 'Rather aſk, my Sophy, why *I* was 'ever born, who brought them upon thee, and 'on that little victim.'

"We had ſo little money left, that it was neceſſary to think of ſomething directly: Elphinſtone therefore went out again to enquire after his mother and his ſiſters, from ſome of

thoſe families who had, during their ſplendour, been the fondeſt of their ſociety and the moſt frequently at their houſe. Among theſe was one lady who had always profeſſed the greateſt affection in the world for them all; never ſpoke to Mrs. Elphinſtone but as her dear friend, nor to her children under any other appellation than her ſweet creatures, or her amiable young friends. Elphinſtone gave me as nearly as he could, the words in which ſhe anſwered his enquiry.

'Why, my dear, dear Sir, you muſt think 'how ſhocked and amazed I was—your poor 'good mother!—to be ſure I had a moſt ſincere 'regard for her—and your ſiſters too; good 'ſweet young women—ſo amiable, ſo accom-'pliſhed!—I'm amazed they never married— 'Well, poor things—God knows, to be ſure, 'what is beſt for us:—Whatever is, is right, as 'Pope obſerves.'

'But, dear Madam, I muſt beg to learn 'where my mother and my ſiſters are?—I am 'but juſt come from the ſhip that brought me 'back to England.'

'Is it poſſible!—Poor young gentleman!— 'I'm ſure I wiſh I could inform you of any 'thing agreeable. You don't know then, per-'haps that every thing in Cavendiſh-ſquare, 'and at Ealing, was ſold under executions, as I 'heard; but I heartily hope it was not ſo. Such 'a reſpectable family! and ſo many fine 'young people! and your poor good mother! '——I ſaw her at Bath laſt winter, after 'thoſe diſagreeable affairs, and was ſorry

'to

'sorry to see that she had lost a great deal of her 'cheerfulness. To be sure that was not to be 'wondered at. I told her how sincerely I wish-'ed her a pleasant voyage, poor worthy wo-'man!' After being compelled to listen to a great deal more of this fulsome cant, he at length learned that one of his sisters boarded with an apothecary's family at Bath, being in an ill state of health; and that his mother, and the other two sisters, finding Mr. Elphhinstone, who was distinguished as 'Squire Squashy, little disposed to do them justice, had, by advise of their friends, embarked for Antigua; so that we probably passed them at sea.

"This was terrible! Every resource seemed to fail us, and in a few days famine was likely to stare us in the face. My beloved brother Frank, however, was, among all my own distresses, ever near my heart; and I determined, for his sake, and because I would leave nothing unattempted for Elphinstone and my child, to go myself to my eldest brother, to implore the kindness of one, and obtain a sight of the other. I said nothing however to Elphinstone of this intention, fearing he might oppose it. I set forth alone, with my baby in my arms, for I could not leave it, nor could I afford to hire a coach. I rapped at the door; and enquiring for Mr. Cathcart, was told by the footman who opened it, that I might wait in the passage, and he would see. In the passage I waited some minutes, and was then told that Mr. Cathcart was busy with some gentlemen, and that I must send in my business and call again.

"Ah! Miſs De Mornay, you have no relations, I think; nor can ever, nor will ever, I hope, 'feel how ſharper than a ſerpent's tooth 'it is' to meet cruelty and ſcorn from thoſe to whom the ſick heart looks for pity and protection.

"I was unwilling to ſend in my name and a verbal meſſage, as there were people with him; I therefore ſat down on a bench where porters and ſervants ſit in thoſe paſſages, and wrote with a pencil—'It is your ſiſter Sophy, who cannot 'call again.' This brought out the great man, for great he ſuddenly was become. His likeneſs to my father, the tender recollection that he was my brother, made me forget all his unkindneſs the moment I ſaw him, and I was throwing myſelf and my child into his arms, when a cold—how d'ye do Mrs. Elphinſtone? fixed me to the place. I ſuppoſe he thought by my looks that I ſhould faint, and was afraid of being expoſed to his ſervants and new relations, for he took my hand, faintly kiſſed my cheek, and leading me into a little dark parlour where there was no fire, deſired me to ſit down.

"Some remains of natural affection, which, in a young man, is very rarely totally extinguiſhed, ſeemed to be contending with pride, avarice, and mean policy, and for a while kept him ſilent: he then enquired coldly into our ſituation, and as I related it, (for he had no idea it was ſo bad,) I ſaw thoſe affections gradually ſhrink from the detail: his heart ſeemed to become harder as its tenderneſs became more neceſſary;

ceſſary; and he declared to me at laſt, that I had formed erroneous ideas of his ſituation if I thought it was in his power to be of any ſervice to me. I roſe to go; but deſired a direction to Frank, which he gave me very unwillingly; for ſince I could contribute nothing to his ſupport, he thought it uſeleſs for me to ſee him. I do not now very well know how I got out of the houſe of this cruel brother, who never introduced me to his family, or ſeemed to wiſh to ſee me again: but I recollect that when I came into Holborn I became ſo very faint and ſick, that I was obliged to get into a coach to return home, which I paid for by changing the laſt guinea I had in the world.

"Ah! my dear Miſs De Mornay! veteran in ſorrow as I have ſince been, I look back with wonder on the ſcene I afterwards paſſed through; I wonder how I ſupported it. We lingered on for three months at theſe lodgings; my beloved Frank often, and always happy to be with us. He was now near ſixteen; very tall and very manly, and repeatedly declared to Elphinſtone that he was well able to get his bread, or to aſſiſt him in any way of buſineſs he could enter into. Buſineſs however was not to be obtained without money; but my father's creditors knowing how well Elphinſtone was acquainted with his affairs, engaged him to aſſiſt them in recovering debts due to him, and allowed him, from time to time, ſome very trifling compenſation, which was our only ſupport.

"As long, however, as he was well—as long as my little boy bleſt me by its innocent ſmiles,

I murmured

I murmured at nothing; and the little time I could ſpare from nurſing him, and after he was in his cradle of a night, I found exquiſite pleaſure in applying thoſe little arts I had learned as matters of amuſement, to the purpoſes of profit. They produced not much; but in our ſituation every thing was an help; and our ſimple meal, partly the produce of my induſtry, and ſhared with my brother Frank, after Elphinſtone came home of a night, was infinitely a ſweeter banquet than the inſipid though ſplendid tables of the affluent had formerly afforded me. At length, however, the perſecution of ill fortune, which ſeemed to have relaxed a little, began anew, and miſery fell upon me where I could leaſt bear it. Elphinſtone was ſeized again with an infectious fever, differing only from that he had at Grenada, in the ſymptoms occaſioned by difference of climate. On his attendance on the creditors, our daily and ſcanty ſubſiſtence depended: with his confinement, every aid of that ſort ceaſed; and I ſaw him languiſhing in a ſick bed, in all the depreſſion of a malignant fever, without the means of giving him the neceſſary aſſiſtance.

"A neighbouring apothecary, however, attended him, who told me that wine was abſolutely neceſſary to be given him in large quantities.—Where was I to get it?—For the firſt time, I had recourſe to a pawnbroker, and my dear, dear Frank was my agent: for now, attached entirely to us, he quitted his ſchool, where, indeed, he knew more than the maſter, and gave himſelf up wholly to our ſervice: while my brother

brother John, not ſorry to be relieved from the expence of ſupporting him, remonſtrated, or rather quarrelled with him once, and, obtaining an excuſe for ſhaking him off, ſaw him no more.

"I had a watch, and a few trinkets; theſe were firſt diſpoſed off, and then ſuch clothes as I could ſpare; for I could not endure the thoughts of taking any thing that belonged to Elphinſtone, though my trembling heart too often whiſpered that he would want them no more.—— Youth, and the ſtrength of his conſtitution, carried him on many days through a rapid and generally fatal diſtemper; and, at length, my fainting courage was ſuſtained by the hope of his recovery, when my lovely infant was ſeized with the ſame terrible diſorder; and I was told, that as it was almoſt always fatal to children, I muſt not hope.

"I know not, then, what became of me; but I think that for ſome hours I was not in my ſenſes. I recollect being ſeized with an earneſt wiſh to have my child attended by a phyſician I had heard named, as eminent for his humanity as for his peculiar ſkill in this diſorder; and, as Frank was not at that moment with us, I wrapped myſelf in an old cloak, and leaving my poor infant to the care of his father, who was juſt able to ſit by the cradle and look at him with eyes of hopeleſs agony, I went away myſelf to implore this phyſician to come to us; and had juſt ſenſe enough to remember the direction I had received to his houſe, but none to notice the objects around me, or to care what people might think, who ſaw me, with

with wild looks and uncertain ſteps, hurrying through the crowd of the buſy and the happy.

" I had proceeded as far as the corner of Cecil-ſtreet, when a croud of carriages and paſſengers impeded the croſſing; I was making my way through them, heedleſs of the danger, and hardly hearing the noiſe, when a footman, in a livery glittering with lace, ſtopped me, and told me he was ordered by his lady to beg I would ſtep to the door of her carriage and ſpeak to her.

' Oh! I cannot; I cannot, indeed,' replied I, without enquiring who his lady was: ' my ' child--my child is ill—I am going for advice ' for him.' I would have paſſed the man; but he followed me, and pointed to an elegant vis-a-vis that was drawn up cloſe to the broad pavement. ' Here is my lady, Ma'am,' ſaid the man.

" I looked up:—it was my Emily, my long loſt, lamented Emily! I gave a faint ſhriek, and hardly heard her in a low and tremulous voice articulate—' My ſiſter! my ſiſter Sophy!'

" Not quite in my ſenſes when I left my lodgings, this interview quite robbed me of them. I caught hold of the door of the carriage, or I ſhould have fallen in the ſtreet. Every object ſwam before me; and I retained only recollection enough to cry, ' My child! ' my child! ſave my child!' and to hear Emily repeat—' What child? what can I do for you? ' Good Heaven! what can I do for you?' But I was unable to anſwer. I found myſelf, however,

ever, in a few moments, placed in the carriage, and Emily holding her ſalts to my noſe, and chafing my temples. When my ſenſes returned, my child was their firſt object; and again I exclaimed—'Oh! do not, do not detain me; 'I muſt go to ſave my child—my poor little 'boy!'

'My dear, dear ſiſter,' cried Emily, 'pray 'ſummons your recollection, and tell me whi-'ther you would go; we will drive you to the 'place directly.' In my anxiety for the life of my infant, I forgot the culpable conduct of my ſiſter; and, telling her where the phyſician lived, ſhe gave orders to her coachman to haſten thither inſtantly. A ſtrange ſtupor overwhelmed me; I could not ſpeak till we came to the door of the houſe: I then looked out; I would have flown out of the carriage. He was not at home: but juſt as we were leaving the door, he drew up to it.

"Then my voice and recollection returned to me. I beſought him moſt earneſtly to go with me. He was that moment come from his firſt round of viſits to change his horſes, and begged we would wait a few moments: but Emily urged him ſo earneſtly to get into her carriage, ſaying ſhe would take him to my lodgings and bring him back, that he could not reſiſt her importunity. He went with us then; and ſo totally was my mind abſorbed in the danger of my child, that I heeded not the ſtrange contraſt between my appearance and the gay ſplendour of my ſiſter; I forgot what ſhe was, and almoſt who ſhe was; and only enquired,

when the phyſician had ſeen my child, whether he would live.

" I ſaw by his looks his opinion to the contrary; nor, indeed, did he attempt to conceal it: but he beſought me to attend to my own health, and to that of my huſband; gave directions about us all, and departed with my ſiſter, refuſing the fee I offered him, and telling me he would come again early the next day.

" Elphinſtone, amazed as he was at the ſcene that had paſſed, had no power to enquire the meaning of it, and I had none to explain it: all my reſolution was rouſed to attend my dying infant; but all could not ſave him—he died: and I now tell it with dry eyes, though, when it befel me, I thought no blow could be ſo ſevere, and that I could not ſurvive it:

" For ſince the birth of Cain, the firſt male child,
" To him that did but yeſterday ſuſpire
" Never was ſuch a gracious creature born!"

" Yet I have lived now above ten years longer, my dear Miſs De Mornay; and have learned that there are ſuch evils in life as make an early death a bleſſing.

" I was delirious, I know not how long, between the exceſs of my affliction and the opiates that were given me to deliver me awhile from the ſenſe of my miſery. In the mean time my ſiſter ſent a careful perſon to attend me, and ſaw me every day herſelf, though I no longer knew her, or any body but Elphinſtone, whoſe hand I held for hours, imploring him not to let them take my child from me. Emily did yet more;

more: ſhe ſupplied us with every thing we wanted, attended herſelf to the funeral of my poor baby, and then took lodgings for us at Kenſington, that we might be removed from the place where we had ſuffered ſo much calamity. In her frequent viſits ſhe ſpoke not either to Elphinſtone or Frank, unleſs they firſt ſpoke to her; and never but on the ſubjects of my health and eaſe. I was not yet quite reſtored to my ſenſes when we removed. She ſent us, by a porter, the next day, a forty pound note, with theſe words.

"MY EVER DEAR SOPHY,

"Having been lucky enough to be of ſome "uſe to you, I rejoice that we have met: but "now, if our future meetings ſhould be un-"pleaſant to you, it depends entirely on you "whether they ſhall be repeated. Whatever "may be my failings, or my errors, I truſt "that among them will never be reckoned, "want of love to my relations, whether they "will acknowledge or no,

"Your ſtill affectionate

"EMILY."

"As ſoon as as I was capable of reading and underſtanding this, all that had paſſed came back to my recollection. I had been ſupported then, for many days, by the wages of ſhame, and now had nothing but a gift from the ſame hand, to ſave my huſband, my brother, and myſelf, from actual hunger. 'Oh! my dear 'father,' cried I, 'can you forgive your un-

'fortunate

'fortunate child; or rather, your unfortunate 'children! and ought I to refuſe taking this 'lovely loſt one, whoſe heart, ſo generous, ſo 'full of ſenſibility, cannot ſurely be quite har-'dened in a courſe of evil!'—I ſhall tire you, my dear Madam, if I am ſo minute: ſuffice it to ſay, that I ſaw my ſiſter; that ſhe owned all her guilt, and all her folly; without having the power, or, at that time, perhaps, the wiſh, to quit a manner of life, where ſhe poſſeſſed boundleſs ſplendour and luxury, for ſuch a precarious ſubſiſtence as women can earn in buſineſs. My remonſtrances ſhe heard with gentleneſs, and mingled her tears with mine: but ſhe pleaded gratitude to the friend who ſupported her, and the impoſſibility of her abandoning him, or exiſting if ſhe did. I was afraid of enquiring who this was; but I found that it was ſome man of high rank who had taken her from the worthleſs Beresford, and with whom ſhe had lived ever ſince.

"Her purpoſe ſeemed to be to detach my thoughts as much as poſſible from her ſituation, and to fix them on my own: and indeed it was very neceſſary; for we had now, in conſequence of Elphinſtone's long illneſs, no ſupport whatever but what her tenderneſs afforded us.

"As Elphinſtone recovered his health, his ſanguine temper returned, and again he formed various projects of entering into buſineſs. It was now the midſt of the American troubles; and ſome part of my father's property, which was thought recoverable, was there. Elphinſtone who now from long habit and from his natu-

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ral diſpoſition, was become unſettled and fond of ſpeculative ſchemes, propoſed to the creditors to go over there in ſearch of theſe ſums. I was ſtill too ill and too much depreſſed by paſt ſufferings to give very minute attention to this plan: I only reſolved not to be left behind, but to ſhare his deſtiny whatever it might be. In a fortnight or three weeks he was every day in town, and the latter part of that time returned in remarkable gay ſpirits, and told me of I know not what proſpects that were opening to him; to which, indifferent to every thing beyond a mere ſubſiſtence, now that I had loſt my boy, and long accuſtomed to hear of viſionary fortune, I gave very little applauſe, till he came home one day elated beyond what I had ever ſeen before, and told me that an offer had that day been made him to become a ſort of under ſecretary to a man high in adminiſtration, into whoſe houſe he was to be taken; that he was to enter on his place the following week, had taken a lodging for me in the neighbourhood, and hired two female ſervants and a footman to attend.

"I wondered at, and rather blamed his precipitancy; but he aſſured me he was right. Frank went with us, as he was to be a ſort of ſecretary, in his turn, to Elphinſtone, who was now domeſticated with his patron, while my brother and I were in very handſome lodgings in Weſtminſter. I do not know by what means the money came, but from this time it was as plenty with Elphinſtone, as it had before been ſcarce. In a few months his views were ſo much enlarged that he took

took a houſe for me, increaſed the number of his ſervants, and from one thing to another our eſtabliſhment was at length on a footing of ſplendour, againſt which I remonſtrated in vain. He aſſured me that his future ſucceſs depended on his keeping up ſuch an appearance; that the emoluments of his place fully entitled him to it; and that I ſhould ſoon ſee him permanently fixed in a ſituation, ſuch as would put us out of the power of fortune.

"In the mean time, as I never loved London, and as my health was very much hurt by a long continuance in it, I prevailed on him to let me have a ſmall houſe at Shene, near Richmond, where it would not be neceſſary, for me at leaſt, to be always in company, which began to be unavoidable in London. To this propoſal he conſented at firſt with reluctance; but afterwards, I thought he was not ſorry to have his houſe in town at liberty to receive the parties he now made there, by which it became diſtinguiſhed for good cheer and high living. I had by this time two boys; one of whom I have ſince loſt, and the other is the eldeſt of theſe: and with many a ſilent and ſtifled ſigh I wiſhed their father would think, while in this proſperous train of fortune, of making ſome proviſion for his increaſing family.

"He heard me always with his uſual good temper, and as conſtantly aſſured me that he was laying by money every year; thongh I never could gueſs how or from whence it came.

"Frank, however, was not only ſupported like a gentleman, but had really more money than,

than, had he been leſs prudent and ſteady, would have been proper for ſo young a man.

"Of this, notwithſtanding the infectious example of the people among whom he lived, and even of Elphinſtone himſelf, he always brought a part to me to put by for him. On theſe occaſions I ſometimes queſtioned him of their manner of life in London, whence I now entirely abſented myſelf; and though he gave me ſuch anſwers as would, he thought, prevent my inquietude, he was too ingenuous to be able to conceal the whole truth. Thus my proſperity was embittered by the fear of falling again into the adverſity, from which we had been delivered by miracle; and I lived in perpetual dread of evils I had no power to prevent. Alas! the greateſt evil was already arrived—the eſtrangement of Elphinſtone's heart!—I ſaw it in a thouſand inſtances; but I knew that reproaches and importunity would not recal it, and I endeavoured, whenever he came down to Shene, to appear cheerful, leſt he ſhould be quite won from me by thoſe whom he now frequented.

"Though he has an excellent underſtanding, he became inſenſibly intoxicated with his good fortune, and never gave himſelf time to think how ſoon it might be at an end, till this fatal period actually arrived. His patron was diſmiſſed from his employment, and the golden dream vaniſhed at once.

"I then knew, that out of immenſe ſums of money he had made, by means, of which I underſtand nothing, he had not reſerved five hundred pounds; and I knew that a miſtreſs whom he

he had ſupported in great ſplendour, had pillaged him of twenty times that ſum. But he was now humbled and unhappy! I forgave all his failings; and ſhould have bleſſed the chance that had reſtored him to me, had we but had a competence to live upon.

"After all our plate and fine furniture in London was ſold, and our debts called in, we found ourſelves about two hundred pounds worſe than nothing. But Elphinſtone ſtill told me he had friends; and now commenced a courſe of ſolicitation and attendance, to which the humbleſt and ſevereſt labour is in my mind infinitely preferable: and in the mean time our ſubſiſtence was derived from his writing for the papers, and now and then by an eighteen-penny political pamphlet.

"I did not notice, that in the height of our proſperity my brother John aſſiduouſly courted our regard; and Elphinſtone had procured him many advantages: among others, that of being ſteward to a nobleman, by whom he made a great deal of money; ſo that he was on our decline, more proſperous than ever. With our failure, however, his love failed alſo; and all we could now obtain of him was, to take Frank as a ſort of aſſiſtant into his buſineſs.

"My poor Emily, who from gratitude and pity I could never wholly forſake, was at this time abroad with her friend; and I had nothing to ſupport me againſt the heavy tide of adverſity but the conſciouſneſs of having done my duty, and the firm reliance on heaven which that conſciouſneſs gave me. Four years we lingered on,

ſometimes

ſometimes flattered by hope of ſome trifling place, and ſometimes ſupported by ſmall remittances from Elphinſtone's mother; while ſhe complained heavily of the conduct of her eldeſt ſon, who had deprived her and his ſiſters of every thing he could take from them.

"Oh! never may thoſe who have it in their power to ſecure an independance, fooliſhly throw it away, and truſt to the fallacious aſſurances of that friendſhip which flouriſhes only in the ſunſhine of affluence!

"Day after day did poor Elphinſtone now attend thoſe men, who but a few months ago were his aſſiduous friends: many, into whoſe pockets he had been the means of putting thouſands, now ſhut their doors againſt him; while, of thoſe who could not ſo eaſily eſcape from his importunity, ſome blamed him for the expence at which he had lived, talked of the advantages of œconomy, and of the demands of their own family—others very gravely harangued on the caprice of fortune, the ups and downs of the world, thanked God they had but a little, but that little was, they hoped, ſecure; yet moſt truly lamented that it was *too* little to enable them too follow the warm dictates of their hearts, in aiding a friend they ſo much reſpected and eſteemed; and with this ſort of language bowed *him* out, whoſe favour and recommendation they had only a few months before ſolicited with meanneſs equal to their preſent ingratitude.

"Wearied at length by this ſad experience of a world to which he was ſtill too much attached, and where, from the vivacity of his ſanguine

ſanguine temper, he was long unwilling to relinquiſh the hope of riſing again into conſideration, he took up once more his old projects of recovering the money due to his father in America: and though that country was no longer under the government of Britain, and his expectations of ſucceſs greatly diminiſhed, he contrived to perſuade thoſe perſons who were intereſted, to furniſh him with a ſmall ſupply of money; and we went, a wandering and unhappy family, to America.

"I could give you, my dear Miſs De Mornay, a long detail of our pilgrimage—of our being once fixed on a farm in the back ſettlements, and expoſed to terrors from the Indians, which, with all my courage, it was utterly out of my power to ſupport; but I have already been too prolix, and tired you with a long hiſtory of ſorrow, from which your ſenſible heart requires ſome relief.

"Alas! I cannot give it you while I dwell on my own ſad ſtory; I will therefore, as briefly as I can, conclude it, by telling you that we were four years in America, and two in Antigua; where my huſband joined his own family, and tried to eſtabliſh himſelf as a merchant. But he was, by this time, conſidered as a ſchemer—as an unlucky man—as one not born to be proſperous; and this deſign ended, like the reſt, in diſappointment.

"I have obtained, however, ſome advantages by my itinerant life; I have learned reſignation, and have ſeen, that almoſt every condition of humanity has evils equal to mine, though

though I have ſometimes thought them inſupportable. But in acquiring patience, hope, I own, has eſcaped me: nor have I now any other wiſh, than to ſee my children well, and to be able to find them bread.

"The diſtinctions of rank have long ſince too been loſt to me, who have paſſed from competence to extreme poverty, from extreme poverty to high affluence, and have again fallen to all the miſeries of dependence and indigence. When Frank, therefore, firſt declared to me his attachment to Jeſſy Woodburn, I oppoſed his marriage, not from pride, but from the apprehenſion of redoubling his difficulties. I then, it is true, depended almoſt entirely on the generous aſſiſtance of that excellent brother; but, believe me, that would never have induced me to oppoſe what was requiſite to his happineſs. I had not known Jeſſy long before I loſt every idea of oppoſition to it, and I wiſhed to ſee them married long before I knew what favourable proſpects might one day open to the object of his affection. To foreſee to whom ſhe would owe the realizing thoſe proſpects, to whom ſhe would afterwards be the means of my being known, was, you know, impoſſible."

"And where, my dear Madam," enquired Celeſtina, "where was Mr. Elphinſtone at the time you ſpeak of?"

"He was gone again to Antigua, on account of his mother's death. I was left with four children, and ſo little money, that heaven only knows what would have become of them and of me, had it not been for Frank."

"And

"And your ſiſter Emily!——I cannot help being intereſted for her with all her failings."

"Ah! would to heaven I knew what was now her lot! I loſt all traces of her after my going to America; nor could mine or Frank's moſt aſſiduous enquiries ever ſince, gain any intelligence. She has changed her name, or taken ſome other means to avoid us; circumſtances that make me fear ſhe is ſunk below her former brilliant but diſcreditable and deſtructive condition. When I think of her and of my children, my ſtoiciſm forſakes me—and of her, unleſs I could ſnatch her from a manner of life ſo terrible, I endeavour not to think; for the thoughts of what ſhe is, and of what ſhe may be, I am very frequently unable to bear. You will allow, my dear Miſs De Mornay, that my own ſituation requires all my courage. A new and perhaps an abortive project now carries me to the remoteſt part of Scotland—with a heart, I hope not callous, but exhauſted by long ſuffering. My huſband is amiable, good tempered, and, I believe, truly attached to me; but he is ſo volatile! ſo unſteady! misfortune has made him reſtleſs, and his deſultory life encreaſed the original blemiſh of his temper—a want of firmneſs; from which have ariſen ſome of the evils that have purſued us.

"One of his ſome-time friends procured him the little appointment he now holds, rather to get rid of his importunity, I think, than to do him real ſervice. It may, however, afford us a reſidence and a ſupport, and I need not ſay that its diſtance from the ſcene of our former proſperity

perity and former adverſity is to me its greateſt recommendation. If my huſband can learn to be content among the cold and dreary Hebrides, if my children have there health, food, and ſhelter, never ſhall I be heard to repine; and indeed my journey, in having you for my companion, begins under auſpices ſo favourable, that my heart, dead to hope as it has long been, is yet not inſenſible of ſomething that nearly reſembles it."

This converſation brought the travellers to the end of their third day's ſtage; and Celeſtina, more than ever intereſted for Mrs. Elphinſtone, forgot for a moment every thing but the ſeries of undeſerved calamities to which ſhe had been liſtening.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER V.

AT the end of a week, Celeſtina, with Mrs. Elphinſtone and her children, were arrived at the ſmall village of Kirby Thorn, where, as the youngeſt of the little boys had appeared the preceding day to droop, his mother determined to paſs the night. Celeſtina, who ſaw her friend greatly alarmed by the indiſpoſition of the child, endeavoured to appeaſe her fears by imputing it to the fatigue and heat of their journey. But the terrified mother ſaw every moment new grounds for her apprehenſions, and the next day the child was evidently much worſe. Four and twenty hours more paſſed in painful ſolicitude, and then Mrs. Elphinſtone knew that it was the meaſles; and became much eaſier, though the eldeſt boy had every ſymptom of having taken the ſame diſorder.

Mrs. Elphinſtone never left her children a moment; and Celeſtina, with the tendereſt ſolicitude, aſſiſted her. The elder boy was of a ſanguine and irritable conſtitution, and the eruptive fever ran high; while the ſituation they were in, at a little inn, where the ſervants and children of the houſe had not had the diſtemper, was

was rendered extremely uncomfortable by the fears of its other inhabitants—the murmurs of the landlady and the reluctance of the ſervants.

Celeſtina, with that cheerful benignity which was on all occaſions ready for the ſervice of the diſtreſſed, now acted for her friend almoſt the part of a ſervant; and in her frequent viſits to the kitchen for what was wanted in the ſick room, ſhe ſaw three ſervants, a poſtillion and two footmen, and obſerved that they ſeemed fixed there, and were not at preſent travelling. The men were remarkably well behaved, and obſerving the diſcontent of the people of the inn, had more than once offered to go out for her on any meſſages ſhe might have occaſion to ſend.

The mind of Celeſtina was, however, too much occupied by the little invalids to ſuffer her curioſity to be awakened by this circumſtance; and ſhe never enquired to whom theſe ſervants, nor a very plain but faſhionable poſt chaiſe, about which ſhe ſaw them ſometimes buſied, belonged. The children were in the height of the diſtemper, and the anxious mother and Celeſtina entirely occupied about them, when a very decent perſon, about fifty, who had the look of a houſekeeper to ſome perſon of faſhion, came to the door of their room, which was left open for the ſake of air, and aſking permiſſion to come in, told them, that her lady, Lady Horatia Howard, had ordered her to wait on them, to enquire if her ſervants or any thing in her power could contribute to the

eaſe

eaſe of the children, or the ladies to whom they belonged.

Mrs. Elphinſtone returned a proper anſwer to this very polite and humane meſſage; and after the perſon who had delivered it was withdrawn, Celeſtina pauſing a moment, ſaid that ſhe recollected the name of Lady Horatia Howard, and that ſhe was one of the friends moſt eſteemed among the numerous acquaintance cultivated by Mrs. Willoughby.

It was now debated between them whether, after ſo obliging a meſſage, Celeſtina ſhould not make herſelf known to Lady Horatia: Mrs. Elphinſtone was inclined to think ſhe ought; but Celeſtina ſeemed rather diſpoſed to avoid it.—"It is true," ſaid ſhe, "that I recollect my dear Mrs. Willoughby to have been very partial to her, but it is probable that ſhe has long ſince forgotten me, and that I ſhall be expoſed to the diſagreeable neceſſity of announcing myſelf, and recalling to her mind circumſtances which I cannot remember but with pain. Perhaps, too, ſhe may know the ſtrange occurrences which have ſince happened; and though I remember her converſation to have been very refined and elegant, perhaps ſhe may expect, if ſhe honours me with her notice, that I ſhould prove myſelf worthy of it, by relating all that has happened; for who knows in what light the Caſtlenorth's may have repreſented my conduct. I am unequal to all this, I fear: and unleſs to avail myſelf of our former acquaintance will be of any uſe to you, my dear Mrs. Elphinſtone, I ſhall not, for my own ſake only, endeavour to renew it."

In

In a few hours afterwards, however, Lady Horatia, who had heard from her ſervant of the fine form and amiable manners of the young perſon who was ſo attentive to the ſick children, contrived to have a door left open by which ſhe muſt paſs; and ſeeing her, immediately knew her. On her return into the room therefore, Lady Horatia ſent her woman again, with her compliments, begging to know if the name of one of the ladies was not De Mornay, and, if it was, requeſting the favour of ſpeaking to her.

Celeſtina could not now decline going; and following the meſſenger, was ſhewn into a room where Lady Horatia ſat alone.

"Pardon me, dear Miſs De Mornay," cried ſhe, the moment ſhe entered, "if inſtead of waiting on you, I requeſt to ſee you here. The truth is, I am fooliſhly affected by the ſight of illneſs. That which has attacked your little friends is not however, I hope, dangerous?"

Celeſtina, who by the freedom and kindneſs of this addreſs was immediately relieved from ſome little uneaſineſs which ſhe had felt from this unexpected interview, anſwered with all her uſual eaſe and grace; and Lady Horatia, who ſeemed extremely pleaſed with having met her, enquired after Lady Molyneux, and ſuch other of their former friends, as ſhe thought would renew no unpleaſing recollections: for though ſhe did not know all that had happened, ſhe was well aware how cruel a blow the death of Mrs. Willoughby had been to Celeſtina, and had

heard ſome confuſed reports that the marriage of Willoughby and Miſs Fitz-Hayman was interrupted by his prior attachment to his mother's ward; but ſhe knew not how far Celeſtina had been preferred to the haughty heireſs; and though ſhe had always a partial kindneſs to her when ſhe uſed to meet her at Mrs. Willoughby's, ſhe had loſt ſight of her entirely afterwards, and, after ſome enquiries, concluded ſhe was gone back to France.

The ſight of her now, at a remote inn in the North, was as agreeable as it was unexpected; and though the difference of their ages ſeemed to preclude any great degree of intimacy before, for Lady Horatia was paſſed the middle of life, yet now ſhe felt herſelf ſtrongly diſpoſed to cultivate a pleaſure thus thrown in her way. Celeſtina could not be inſenſible of the honour ſhe derived from the notice of a perſon more eminent for her goodneſs and her talents than her birth or her fortune, and always pleaſing, ſhe grew infinitely more ſo where ſhe deſired to pleaſe. In a few hours, therefore, they became ſo happy with each other, that Lady Horatia could not part with her but with regret; and Celeſtina would have left her with reluctance on any other occaſion than to attend the children of her friend, (which, during her abſence, Mrs. Hemmings, Lady Horatia's woman, had done, with an attention that prevented Mrs. Elphinſtone's ſuffering from the engagement of Celeſtina with her lady.)

The children became better and their mother eaſier. Lady Horatia ſaw and liked her, and invited

invited both her and Celeſtina to give her as much of their time as they could ſpare from their little convaleſcents. In conſequence of this invitation they were now a good deal with her, and Mrs. Elphinſtone on ſome occaſion expreſſing how fortunate ſhe thought herſelf, that in ſo remote a place ſhe had the honour of becoming known to her, Lady Horatia ſaid, ſmiling,—"And I dare ſay you think it very extraordinary too, my dear Madam; for unleſs you had known me before, it would be difficult to account for my being here. Did you never remark that unhappineſs makes people reſtleſs?"

"Oh, yes! very often," replied Mrs. Elphinſtone with a ſigh.

"It has had that effect on me," ſaid Lady Horatia; "and ſatiated with every thing in what is called the world, where I have paſſed the greater part of my life, I often leave it and ramble about, careleſs of every thing but change of place; my old faithful ſervants and a few books being the ſole companions of my travels. I have for theſe laſt four or five years given up my houſe in the country, and paſſed all the ſummer in wandering about Switzerland, France and England. This year I am going into Scotland, for no other reaſon than becauſe I have not been there before: at this village one of my horſes fell lame; and as it was indifferent to me where I was, I agreed to my ſervant's requeſt of ſtaying here a day or two. While I waited, you arrived here, and I own very ſincerely that I became intereſted for the children and for the ladies, ſuch as Hemmings deſcribed them to me.

I hope we ſhall none of us be ſorry for the accidents that detained us here, when the little boys are quite well, as I am perſuaded they will be now in a few days. They will have paſſed happily through a very troubleſome diſtemper, and I think you will each of you have added a friend to your ſtock: the advantage, however, will be ſtill more evidently mine, for I hope to have added two."

A few days confirmed the good opinion which Lady Horatia entertained of her new acquaintance and her acquaintance of her. If ſhe was particularly attached to Celeſtina, it was becauſe ſhe was young enough to be her daughter, and becauſe ſhe told her that ſhe could not look at her, eſpecially when ſhe was reading or employed in any thing that gave a ſerious caſt to her features, without remarking her likeneſs to a perſon ſhe had once fondly loved.

Celeſtina, whoſe thoughts were perpetually fixed on the ſtrange myſtery which hung over her birth, and who caught at every thing likely to clear it up, bluſhed deeply the firſt time ſhe made this remark, and aſked whether this perſon was a foreigner?

Lady Horatia ſighed in her turn, and ſaid, no! it was a brother of hers, who had not been long dead. "He was a ſoldier," ſaid ſhe, "and loſt his life in America, in that war which tore it from the Britiſh empire. Judge yourſelf of the likeneſs, though I well know it muſt be accidental."

She then took out of a travelling trunk a little filligreed caſket, in which were ſeveral valuable trinkets

trinkets and ſeveral pictures. Three were the portraits of gentlemen.—" Come," ſaid Lady Horatia, " to prove whether this reſemblance is merely a chimera of mine, let us aſk Mrs. Elphinſtone if among theſe pictures ſhe ſees one which is like any body ſhe knows; for my dear Miſs de Mornay, do you know this ſimilitude of countenance ſtruck me when you were a child with Mrs. Willoughby; and now that your features are more formed, it is, in my mind, wonderfully ſtrong. But, my ſweet friend, why do you appear ſo uneaſy?"

" I cannot very well tell," replied Celeſtina, trying to force a ſmile: " I am ſure to bear a reſemblance to any body dear to your Ladyſhip muſt be ever pleaſing to me, though I well know that it muſt be, as you obſerve, quite accidental."

Mrs. Elphinſtone then coming in, Lady Horatia ſhewed her the three portraits:—" Come tell us, Mrs. Elphinſtone, if you know any living friend whom either of theſe portraits reſembles?"

Mrs. Elphinſtone took them, and looked ſteadily a moment on each; then fixing on one, ſhe looked more intently, firſt on that and then on Celeſtina. Indeed I think I do," cried ſhe: " I ſurely ſee a reſemblance—a very ſtrong reſemblance, between this picture and Miſs de Mornay. Bleſs me, how very like! the ſhape of the face, the mouth, the dark-brown eyebrow, the colour of the eyes, the ſetting on of the hair round the forehead and temples; except that it is leſs fair, that the features are

proportionably

proportionably larger, and that you wear a cap, in truth, my dear friend, it might have been drawn for you."

"And yet," ſaid Lady Horatia, ſmiling mournfully, "this was drawn for a brother of mine, who could, I fear, be no relation to our lovely friend here: ſo ſtrangely it happens that features coincide."

"It is fortunate, very fortunate for me, Madam," ſaid Celeſtina gravely, "if this reſemblance has had the effect of prejudicing your Ladyſhip in my favour."

"You have merit enough to juſtify it, though I had conceived an affection for you without any introduction. But we will talk no more of reſemblances, if ſuch diſcourſe makes us melancholy."

Lady Horatia then turned the converſation; and the next day, as the two little boys were by this time well enough to continue their journey, they moved on about twenty miles together; Lady Horatia begging for that day to have Celeſtina with her, while her woman went with Mrs. Elphinſtone, to aſſiſt in the care of her children.

Celeſtina, who knew only in general that Lady Horatia was a widow of very affluent fortune, who gave up much of her time to literary purſuits and literary connections, and much of her fortune to the aſſiſtance of the unhappy, now learned that domeſtic misfortunes had contributed, with her natural turn of mind, to eſtrange her entirely from thoſe ſcenes where Celeſtina had ſometimes formerly ſeen her; and that

that having loſt an only daughter, (the laſt of her children,) of a deep decline, ſhe now tried to call off her mind from the ſubjects of her mournful contemplations by change of place, and had never, ſince that period, reſided long at any of her own houſes, but had paſſed almoſt the whole year in travelling; ſtopping wherever ſhe found a pleaſant ſpot, and often remaining ſeveral days, or even weeks, at ſome remote houſe. She had once or twice, ſhe ſaid, engaged friends to go with her on theſe expeditions, but had always found the difficulties they made ſo much counterbalance the pleaſure they were capable of affording her, that ſhe now travelled alone. "Some," ſaid ſhe, "were tired, and ſome were taſteleſs; ſome were talkative and ſome were inſipid. You will certainly think me faſtidious; and perhaps I am ſo; but indeed it is more difficult to find ſuch a companion as ſuits me in every reſpect, than appears at firſt view. Women of my own age, who are eſtabliſhed in the world, cannot of courſe leave their families and connections; thoſe who are not, are for the moſt part unhappy from pecuniary or family diſtreſſes, and the mind, depreſſed at that period of life, has loſt its power of reſiſtance, and ſinks in that hopeleſs languor from which I often want to be myſelf relieved by cheerful converſation. The young do not travel for proſpects, or enjoy cataracts and mountains: they are looking out for lovers; and are wearied when there are neither men to talk to or adventures to be hoped for. I have tried two or three young ladies; and found, that as we had no ideas in common, our converſation

converſation was ſoon exhauſted; and when I was near any place of ſummer reſort, or paſſed through a town at the time of a race or a muſic meeting, their hearts were beating to enter into ſcenes which I was only ſolicitous to fly from. Do you know, however, that if I had not met you abſolutely engaged on this Scottiſh journey, I ſhould have been ſtrongly tempted to enquire whether you would allow me to make the experiment once more, where I am ſtrongly impreſſed with an idea that I ſhould meet with better ſucceſs."

Celeſtina anſwered, that her good opinion did her the utmoſt honour: and by degrees the tender and maternal ſolicitude Lady Horatia expreſſed for her, drew from her the little narrative of her life. Lady Horatia expreſſed the greateſt averſion to Lady Caſtlenorth. "It is true," ſaid ſhe, "I do not know her much from my own obſervation; for ſhe is a woman whoſe converſation I have always diſliked and avoided; but from ſome anecdotes of her that have been related to me by thoſe who know her well, I believe it may with truth be ſaid of her, as was ſaid of a celebrated political character, that ſhe has 'a heart 'to imagine, a head to contrive, and a hand to 'execute any miſchief.' Willoughby is young, open-hearted, and artleſs: by no means likely to ſuſpect, or likely to detect artifice ſo deep as what ſhe is capable of; and I am well convinced that there are no contrivances at which ſhe would heſitate, either to carry a favourite point or avenge its failure."

Celeſtina

Celeſtina was extremely comforted by this opinion given by ſo good a judge. Every other ſorrow was comparatively light to that which ſhe felt from the idea, whenever it forced itſelf upon her mind, that Willoughby had, through ambition, or caprice, or avarice, voluntarily deſerted her; and every opinion that ſtrengthened her own hopes of his unaltered affection, and imputed his leaving her to the evil machinations of the Caſtlenorths, was ſoothing and conſolatory.

Lady Horatia Howard was now travelling towards Edinburgh, and made the time of Mrs. Elphinſtone her own, for the pleaſure ſhe derived from her company, and ſtill more from that of Celeſtina, to whom during this journey, ſhe became ſo much attached, that ſhe made her promiſe to come to her whenever the abode ſhe was now going to ſhould be inconvenient, or whenever ſhe was under the neceſſity of changing it. An invitation ſo flattering was gratefully accepted; and Lady Horatia having ſhewn both her travelling friends every polite and generous attention, took leave of them with regret on their leaving Edinburgh with Elphinſtone, who was there waiting for them. She gave Celeſtina directions whither to write to her for the remainder of the ſummer, and again made her promiſe to come to her in the winter, if ſhe left her Scottiſh friends; and at all events to contrive to paſs with her two or three months of the next ſummer. After taking leave of her, a very tedious and very dreary journey of many days brought the Elphinſtones' and Celeſtina to

the ſea ſide, where they were to embark for the Iſle of Skie. Mrs. Elphinſtone, accuſtomed to ſee ſo many different countries, was yet ſtruck with diſmay at the ſight of the black and dreary heaths over which they travelled; and in ſpite of all her attempts to ſuſtain her courage, ſhe looked at her children with eyes where maternal anguiſh was too viſibly expreſſed. Elphinſtone however, to whom novelty had always charms, was not yet weary of his ſituation, and he was as gay and unconcerned as if he had been leading his wife to the moſt beautiful eſtate in England. Celeſtina, though very little delighted with the country they had paſſed through, was determined to teſtify no diſlike to it that might add to the painful dejection of her friend, and by making light of the inconveniencies of the journey, and putting their hopes and proſpects in the faireſt light, ſhe ſupported her drooping ſpirits, which the thoughtleſs and ſomewhat unfeeling vivacity of Elphinſtone himſelf, ſerved rather to depreſs than to ſupport.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VIII.

ARRIVED at their inſular abode after great fatigué, Mrs. Elphinſtone, recalling all her fortitude, buſied herſelf in making it as comfortable as ſhe could; and aſſumed, at leaſt, the appearance of cheerfulneſs, though Celeſtina ſaw with concern that it was often *but* appearance. Celeſtina herſelf, however, whoſe mind had too long been unpleaſingly called off from that object on which ſhe beſt loved to fix it, was far from being diſpleaſed by the perfect ſecluſion of the place. She could now wander whole days alone, amid the wild ſolitude in which ſhe found herſelf, liſtening only to the ruſh of the cataract, which, daſhing through broken ſtones, ſparkled amid the dark heath on either ſide of it; or the ſullen waves of the ocean itſelf, which on all ſides ſurrounded her. The ptarmigan*, burſting from its heathy covert, or the ſea fowl ſcreaming from the rocks, were the only ſounds that broke theſe murmurs; but ſhe found her ſpirits ſoothed by the wildneſs of the places ſhe viſited; and far from regretting the more cultivated ſcenes ſhe had left, ſhe rejoiced

* A bird of the grous kind, common in the highlands of Scotland.

joiced that ſince ſhe no longer could hope to ſee Willoughby, ſhe was releaſed from the neceſſity of attending to any other perſon.

The immenſe diſtance that was now between them, ſhe ſometimes conſidered with diſmay; but at others ſhe remembered—

"That diſtance only, cannot change the heart."

She truſted on the long tried, the long aſſured tenderneſs of her lover, and was willing to indulge the ſoothing hope that they ſhould meet again to be ſeparated no more, and that he was labouring to remove the fatal obſtacle, whatever it was, that now divided them.

After having been above five weeks on the iſland, a large pacquet arrived from Cathcart. It encloſed, among many to his ſiſter, one to Celeſtina from Willoughby; and this, more than any ſhe had yet received from him ſince his abſence, ſeemed to aſſure her of his unfailing attachment. It was leſs confuſed than thoſe he had formerly written, and ſeemed the production of a mind more maſter of itſelf: and, though it did not ſpeak in poſitive terms of his immediate return, Celeſtina fancied that many of the expreſſions alluded to that hour; and her heart found this idea ſo deliciouſly ſoothing, that ſhe would not ſuffer her reaſon to deprive her of any part of the pleaſure ſhe found in indulging it.

A few of the reſidents of this and the neighbouring iſlands were by this time acquainted at the houſe of Mr. Elphinſtone. The young,

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(and of young people their viſitors principally conſiſted,) were all charmed with Celeſtina, who, whatever was her inclination for ſolitude, never refuſed to make one in the ramble of the morning, or to join the cheerful dance of an evening. Elphinſtone, naturally good humoured, and particularly deſirous of pleaſing her, ſoon became anxious to promote theſe parties, which Celeſtina, whoſe heart was opened to new ſenſations of pleaſure ſince the receipt of Willoughby's laſt letter, did not decline; not only becauſe ſhe found much in theſe remote regions to gratify her curioſity, but becauſe ſhe foreſaw that, from the ſhortneſs of the ſummer ſo far North, the days when theſe amuſements were practicable were drawing to their concluſion, and that ſhe ſoon ſhould be left unmoleſted, to liſten to the roaring of the waters, and the ſighings of the wind round the naked rocks, againſt which it inceſſantly beat.

It was now the end of July, and Celeſtina had already viſited Jona and ſeveral other iſlands. Sometimes theſe excurſions had been made with Mrs. Elphinſtone, but oftener without her. Elphinſtone kept a boat, which was always ready for the ſervice of Celeſtina, and when his wife could not go with her, a Miſs Macqueen, a very agreeable young highland lady, always made the third.

Several little iſles, which afford no habitations for winter, are ſcattered among the larger iſlands, which are called the Hebrides. One of theſe lay within ſight of Elphinſtone's houſe, (which was cloſe to the ſhore,) at the diſtance of about

about a mile and a half. It was remarkable for the groteſque form of the cliffs which aroſe round it, and for a ſtream of the pureſt water, that bubbled up at the higheſt ground, and fell into the ſea through a chaſm of the rock. Celeſtina, to whom Elphinſtone had ſhewn it, laughingly called it her iſland; and he, in return, had ſaid, that were ſhe eſtabliſhed on it, it would become more dangerous than the iſland of Calypſo. Among other little plans of amuſement, which the decline of ſummer inſenſibly rendered more frequent, it was agreed that on the firſt fine day ſome cold proviſions ſhould be taken, and that they would all dine together on one of the natural ſtone tables in Celeſtina's iſland.

A fine day was found; the party, which were Mr. and Mrs. Elphinſtone, Miſs Macqueen, and two gentlemen, were ready, when one of the boatmen who uſually accompanied them was no where to be found. Elphinſtone, equally impatient and eager, whatever was the importance or inſignificance of the matter he was engaged in, was going himſelf in ſearch of the miſſing man, when one of thoſe who remained in the boat followed and told him that there was a young man a few yards farther on the ſhore, who would take the place of him that was abſent, and that it was better not to wait: Elphinſtone, ſatisfied ſo long as his party was not interrupted, accepted the offer, and the boatman beckoning to a highlander who ſtood at ſome diſtance, he ran towards them and was admitted into the boat.

The party now put off from ſhore. The water

water was beautifully ſmooth, the ſky clear, and the wind in their favour; very little exertion therefore on the part of the men who were entruſted with the navigation, landed them ſafely on the ilk. It did not contain more than three acres of land, and the ſole inhabitant of it was a ſolitary herdſman, whoſe temporary dwelling, compoſed of looſe ſtones, turf, and heath, he had raiſed under the protection of a large cliff of grey ſlate, that ſeemed to have ſtarted away, in ſome ſtrange concuſſion of nature, from ſome other iſland, and to have fixed itſelf as a ſea mark amidſt the perpendicular and abrupt rocks that fenced this on every ſide. The ſpring burſt out near its baſe, and here the party ſat down to make their gay repaſt.

When it was over, the gentlemen went away; and while the boatmen were at dinner, puſhed out the boat themſelves and began to fiſh near the ſhore, while Celeſtina, leaving the ladies together, walked away alone to the weſtern coaſt of the iſland.

The ſun was already declining in an almoſt cloudleſs ſky, and gave the warmeſt ſplendour to the broad expanſe of ocean, broken by ſeveral iſlands, whoſe rocky points and angular cliffs caught the ſtrong lights, in brilliant contraſt to the lucid hue of the heath with which their ſummits were cloathed, and which on the northern and eaſtern ſides threw a dark ſhadow on the clear and tranquil boſom of the ſea. The ſea birds, in ſwarming myriads, were returning to their neſts among the ragged precipices beneath her

her; and Celeſtina, recalling to her mind the "green delights" of Alveſtone,

"Its deepening woods, gay lawns, and airy ſummits,"

compared it, in penſive contemplation, with the ſcene before her; yet different as they were, ſhe thought that with Willoughby any place would be to her a paradiſe; and that even in ſuch a remote ſpot as this ſhe ſhould be happy if it gave only a ſubſiſtence with him.

This train of thought a little indulged, made her have recourſe to her pencil, and produced an addreſs to him in the following

SONNET.

On this lone iſland, whoſe unfruitful breaſt
Feeds but the ſummer-ſhepherds little flock,
With ſcanty herbage from the half cloath'd rock,
Where oſprays, cormorants, and ſea mews reſt;
Even in a ſcene ſo deſolate and rude
I could with thee for months and years be bleſt;
And, of thy tenderneſs and love poſſeſt,
Find all *my* world in this lone ſolitude!
When the bright ſun theſe northern ſeas illume,
With thee admire the lights reflected charms;
And when drear Winter ſpreads his cheerleſs gloom,
Still find Elyſium in thy ſheltering arms;
For thou to me canſt ſovereign bliſs impart,
Thy mind my empire, and my throne thy heart.

The broad orb of the ſun was now only half ſeen above the horizon; and Celeſtina, who had little marked the progreſs of time, roſe, and haſtened to join her companions; as ſhe turned for this purpoſe towards that part of the iſland where ſhe had left them, ſhe ſaw the high-

lander,

lander, who had been taken by chance into the boat in conſequence of the abſence of another, ſtart up from the ground at about two hundred paces from her, where he ſeemed to have been concealed behind a cairn or pile of rude ſtones, and hurry away towards the part of the ſhore where the boat had been left. The incident however made no great impreſſion on her mind, but from the ſingular appearance of the man, who was in a complete highland dreſs, which is now not often ſeen, and which made him, as he walked very quickly on before her, ſeem exactly the figure a painter would have choſen to have placed in a landſcape, repreſenting the heathy ſummits and romantic rocks of the Hebrides.

She ſoon rejoined Mrs. Elphinſtone and Miſs Macqueen. The three gentlemen almoſt as ſoon approached to tell them it was time to return; and they arrived again at their home after a little excurſion with which all ſeemed pleaſed, though Celeſtina had ſuffered ſome raillery for having ſo long deſerted them.

Every day now paſſed nearly alike, diverſified only now and then by the company of a ſtranger from ſome of the other iſlands, and ſometimes a party in the boat. Elphinſtone was not yet tired by the project which brought him hither, for to uſe an expreſſion of his wife's, which ſhe uttered with a melancholy ſmile to Celeſtina, "the new was not yet off." He was therefore gay and alert; perſuaded himſelf by calculations, which he made after his own ſanguine manner, that he was not only a benefac-

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tor to the public, but ſhould in a few years realize a great fortune by facilitating the capture of herrings among the weſtern iſlands of Scotland.

The ſeaſon for the proof of his exploits in this way was now rapidly approaching, and he became every day more buſy: but his wife looked forward to it with leſs pleaſure: ſhe languiſhed for her little girls, who were at the other extremity of England, and thought with diſmay of the tempeſts of winter, which would ſhut her out from the little communication ſhe yet had with that country. But whatever was her regret, ſhe ſuffered it not to diſturb the tranſient happineſs her huſband ſeemed to enjoy, nor to communicate any gloom to the milder cheerfulneſs of Celeſtina, whoſe company was her greateſt reſource againſt that cold deſpondence, which, in deſpite of all her fortitude, ſometimes ſeized on her heart.

Celeſtina had now been almoſt three months an inhabitant of the Iſle of Skie, and felt nothing unpleaſant in her inſular ſituation but the length of time that muſt always elapſe before ſhe could hear from Willoughby or even from Cathcart. A ſecond packet was however brought to Mrs. Elphinſtone from the latter before the expiration of the eleventh week of their abode. With eager impatience it was opened. Celeſtina received her part of it with a beating heart; but on unſealing it found no letter from Willoughby. A letter in a hand which ſhe did not at the moment recollect ever to have ſeen before, attracted her attention and mingled it with

ſomething

ſomething of terror. She looked eagerly at the name, and ſaw it ſigned with that of the elder Mr. Thorold. Her ſpirits ſunk! was it ſome ill news of Willoughby, which he communicated that he might ſoften the blow? She hurried it over in ſuch breathleſs agitation as hardly gave her leave to underſtand what ſhe read, which was to this effect:

"Your old friend, amiable Celeſtina, though "he has only had one letter from you ſince you "left him, reminds you of himſelf once more, "and is ſorry that, like every thing in this "world, his letter will convey to you a mixture "of pleaſure and pain.

"My daughter Arabella is married, to her "own wiſhes and thoſe of her mother. In "point of fortune ſhe has done well. We "cannot here obtain every thing. I hope ſhe "will be happy, and am ſure ſhe will be rich, "which in the opinion of moſt fathers, you know, "puts the former point out of doubt. You "will gueſs that Mr. Bettenſon is the gentle-"man who is now numbered with my family. "My wife has been gone with the new marri-"ed couple ſome weeks to the ſeat of Mr. Bet-"tenſon's father in Norfolk.

"You know I love home; and I love that "thoſe who are leſs delighted with it ſhould "not be needleſsly diſturbed when they are "out; for which reaſon I have never com-"municated to his mother, that Montague, "after attending his ſiſter's wedding here, did "not return to Oxford as he talked of doing;

"that

" that I know not whither he is gone, and have
" only had one letter from him ſince, in which
" he aſſures me he is well, and deſires I would
" not be uneaſy about him.

" It is very difficult to be otherwiſe. This
" eccentric young man makes me tremble
" for him perpetually. Having no clue to di-
" rect my gueſſes, I have no conjecture where
" or with whom he is; and think it better to
" ſay as little as I can about an abſence on
" which a thouſand unfavourable conſtructions
" may be put. Ah! my lovely ward, how for-
" tunate it would have been, if, when his
" judgment directed his heart, it could have
" been accepted where—but this is wrong, or
" at beſt uſeleſs. Farewel! May heaven pro-
" tect you! and I pray you not to forget

" your moſt faithful friend,

" E. THOROLD."

Relieved from her firſt apprehenſions, Celeſtina felt extremely concerned at the abſence of Montague Thorold; ſo painful to his father, perhaps ſo diſcreditable to himſelf. She read over the letter again, and fancied it very evident that Mr. Thorold imputed it to ſome new attachment; and giving a ſigh to the recollection of all it muſt coſt ſuch a father to ſee ſuch an unfortunate turn of mind blaſt all the acquirements of learning, and all the advantages of genius, ſhe turned her thoughts to Willoughby, and felt with renewed poignancy the diſappointment of not having heard from him.

Another and another week paſſed without any intelligence,

intelligence, and all the ſoothing hopes Celeſtina had ſo fondly encouraged gradually gave way to fear and apprehenſion. At length a ſecond packet arrived: it contained a letter indeed from Willoughby; but ſo far was it from confirming the favourable preſages of the former, that ſhe ſaw in it only a prelude to the event which other information made her believe would ſoon happen—the marriage of Willoughby and Miſs Fitz-Hayman. Lady Horatia Howard, whoſe attachment to Celeſtina had taken very deep root, had written to her from London, whither ſhe was now gone, and had told her, with as much tenderneſs as ſhe could, that ſuch was the general report among the relations of the family, and what was generally believed in the world.—From the ſame channel ſhe alſo learned that Sir Philip and Lady Molyneux were expected in England early in the enſuing winter, and that a large houſe in Portman-ſquare was fitting up in the moſt ſplendid ſtile for their reception.

Lady Horatia concluded a moſt friendly letter to Celeſtina thus:

"But my dear Miſs De Mornay, however all "theſe things may be, let me hope that you will "not hide yourſelf in the Hebrides all the win- "ter: why ſhould you? Talents and virtues "like your's were never intended for obſcurity. "Come then to me, and aſſure yourſelf of "trueſt welcome. You need not apprehend "meeting Mr. Willoughby and his bride, for "it is underſtood that they are to remain ſome "time abroad; and before they return to Eng- "land, you will have learned to conquer thoſe "painful emotions which the ſight of them now

"perhaps

" perhaps might give you. *Your* underſtanding " ſets you above the puerile indulgence which " inferior minds claim by preſcription towards " a firſt love. The man whom any common " conſideration could induce, after having won " your affections, to deſert you, never could " deſerve you; and if ſome inſurmountable " barrier is between you, you will learn to con- " ſider him as a friend, and conſult his peace in " regaining that cheerfulneſs which he meant " not to deſtroy; but which to ſee deſtroyed, " muſt overcloud his days, however proſper- " ous they may otherwiſe be."

There was in this letter more meant than was expreſſed; and on conſidering it, the wonder and uneaſineſs of Celeſtina were redoubled. But however obliged ſhe thought herſelf by the friendly intereſt Lady Horatia took in her happineſs, and however juſt her arguments might be, ſhe felt no inclination to quit her preſent ſolitude; and ſince ſhe had now leſs hope than ever of meeting Willoughby, ſhe had leſs than ever a deſire to return into the world, but gave herſelf up to that melancholy deſpondence, againſt which hope, and her own ſanguine and cheerful temper, had till now ſupported her.

To indulge this encreaſing ſadneſs, it was now her cuſtom to walk out alone after dinner, and to make for herſelf a ſpecies of gloomy enjoyment from the dreary and wild ſcenes around her. A little time before, ſhe had been imagining how pleaſant the moſt deſolate of theſe barren iſlands might be rendered to her by the preſence of her beloved Willoughby. She now rather ſought

images

images of horror. The ſun, far diſtant from this northern region, was as faint and languid as the ſick thoughts of Celeſtina: his feeble rays no longer gave any warm colouring to the rugged cliffs that roſe above her head, or lent the undulating ſea that ſparkling brilliance which a few weeks before had given gaiety and cheerfulneſs even to theſe ſcattered maſſes of almoſt naked ſtone, againſt which the water inceſſantly broke. Grey, ſullen, and cold, the waves now ſlowly rolled towards the ſhore, where Celeſtina frequently ſat whole hours, as if to count them, when ſhe had in reality no idea preſent to her but Willoughby loſt to her for ever—— Willoughby forgetting her, and married to Miſs Fitz-Hayman!

She had more than once remarked, in returning from her walks, that a man, who kept always at ſuch a diſtance that ſhe could merely diſcover to be a highlander, ſeemed to be obſerving her; yet as he never came near her, and always diſappeared before ſhe got near the houſe, ſhe could not imagine him to be one of the people belonging to Elphinſtone: but puzzled rather than alarmed by his appearance, for which ſhe could not account, ſhe inſenſibly ceaſed to notice him. Mrs. Elphinſtone, occupied as ſhe was by her own domeſtic uneaſineſs, was ſtill moſt tenderly attentive to Celeſtina, and endeavoured to communicate to her ſome of that ſtill and mournful acquieſcence which ſerved her in place of philoſophy. Celeſtina had not yet ſuffered enough to learn it; but ſhe forbore to add to the melancholy of her friend by indulging

ing her own while they were together; and this reſtraint threw her more than ever into entire ſolitude, though the autumn was ſo far advanced that the weather frequently drove her from the open hill, or the vale under it, to the caſual ſhelter of ſome natural cave, by the ſide of which, the torrent, encreaſed by the ſtorm, hoarſely ruſhed, and was anſwered by the roar of other ſtreams, whoſe hollow murmurs ſwelled in the guſts of wind that whiſtled through the mountainous tracks, and compelled even the fowls of the deſart to ſeek ſhelter, where only it was afforded, within the caverns of the cliffs, or among the matted heath that cloathed their ſummits.

The delicate, the elegant, the lovely Celeſtina, ſhe whoſe talents would have adorned the moſt informed ſociety, and whoſe beauty might have given new luſtre to the faireſt aſſembly, was thus a ſelf-baniſhed recluſe in the remoteſt and moſt uncultivated part of the Britiſh dominions. Her wiſh now was, to paſs her whole life here, in that ſullen calm which ſhe at length hoped to obtain; and the rudeſt ſcene of theſe iſlands now appeared to her infinitely preferable to any of the pleaſures Lady Horatia Howard offered her, ſince *they* could only ſerve to remind her of Willoughby; perhaps to ſhew her how happy he could learn to be, united to another.

The frequency of ſtorms now prevented many of thoſe viſits which had, during ſummer, a little broken, for Elphinſtone, the uniformity of ſolitude; but it was the height of the ſeaſon for catching herrings, and he was buſy,

buſy, and for the preſent happy; while his unfortunate wife, who, deſolate as her preſent ſituation was, yet dreaded the hour when this buſtle ſhould ſink into diſcontent and give place to other projects, received him on his return from thoſe expeditions to other iſlands, in which he was now frequently engaged, always with cheerfulneſs, which he did not, or would not ſee, was forced; and ſometimes with ſmiles, which to every body but him very evidently were the ſmiles of ſtifled anguiſh.

Celeſtina anſwered Lady Horatia's letter as it deſerved, but to Willoughby ſhe determined not to write. That trembling ſolicitude with which ſhe had been accuſtomed to expect letters from him, it was now, ſhe thought, time to ſubdue, for ſhe perſuaded herſelf that never again they would bring to her any thing but anguiſh and regret: and yet by thoſe contradicting ſenſations to which violent attachments ſubject the human heart, ſhe inceſſantly indulged herſelf in thinking of all thoſe happy hours which ſhe had paſſed with him, whom ſhe fancied deſerved little or no regret, of whom ſhe ought not to think at all, and yet was ſo fond of recollecting, that every converſation was irkſome to her, and every employment a taſk, which took off her attention a moment from him.

" Ti perdo! ti laſcio, non ti vedro piu—"

ſhe repeated inceſſantly to herſelf, ſometimes with tears of tenderneſs, and ſometimes with thoſe painful emotions of mingled anger and re-

gret which preſs on the heart when pride and reſentment are ſtruggling with affection. In other moods ſhe reproached herſelf for thus cheriſhing this unhappy paſſion, tried to recal thoſe days of reſignation when, without hope of ever being his, ſhe yet preferred Willoughby to all mankind; and to diſmiſs from her mind for ever the recollection of the few weeks when he had awakened that hope, and called forth all her ſenſibility only as it ſhould ſeem to render her wretched; then ſhe exclaimed in her native language—

" Felicité paſſée
" Qui ne peut revenir
" Tourment de ma penſée
" Que n'ai je en te perdant, perdu le ſouvenir."

In theſe gloomy moods, ſhe was quite unable to remain a moment in company, eſpecially in the company of Elphinſtone, who with the true projecter's infatuation, fancied every body elſe as much intereſted about the fiſhery as he was; and perſecuted her with details of how many *buſſes* he had out and how many *laſts* they had taken; what was the beſt method of curing them, and of the ſuperiority which a few years would give the fiſhery in which he was engaged, over the Dutch.

Celeſtina began to dread the converſation; and had it not been for Mrs. Elphinſtone, of whoſe ſuffering merit ſhe was every hour more ſenſible, ſhe would not have forborne to expreſs her wearineſs and diſguſt. A hearer was neceſſary to Elphinſtone; and when he had nobody elſe to talk to, this unenviable place was filled by the inwardly-impatient Celeſtina.

It

It happened, however, that she was released from this for some days. Towards the end of November, Elphinstone went to the isle of Herries, on his business, as he fancied, and the wind being against his return, she no longer listened to the method of curing herrings, but returned to her shortened but less interrupted walks. In one of these, towards the close of a very lowering and cheerless day, when her way was along the rugged cliffs, that, on the western side of the island, hung over the sea, she composed the following sonnet:

THE PILGRIM.

Faultering and sad, the unhappy pilgrim roves,
Who, on the eve of bleak December's night,
Divided far from all he fondly loves,
Journeys alone, along the giddy height
Of these steep cliffs, and as the sun's last ray
Fades in the West, sees, from the rocky verge,
Dark tempest scowling o'er the shorten'd day,
And hears, with ear appall'd, the impetuous surge
Beneath him thunder!—So, with heart oppress,
Alone, reluctant, desolate, and slow,
By friendship's cheering radiance *now* unbless,
Along life's rudest path I seem to go;
Nor see where yet the anxious heart may rest,
That trembling at the past—recoils from future woe!

CHAPTER IX.

ELPHINSTONE had now been abſent ſome days, and the wind, which was contrary and violent, prevented his return to the place of his abode. Mrs. Elphinſtone became uneaſy at the ſtorms which detained him, and Celeſtina participated in her anxiety. At length the wind ſunk, and, towards the evening of the fifth day of his abſence, was fair to bring him from Herries. Mrs. Elphinſtone, who had been a good deal alarmed by the hurricanes of ſeveral preceding days, and had wearied her ſpirits by watching the weather and keeping an anxious eye towards the impracticable ſea, found herſelf indiſpoſed and ſhivering; and telling Celeſtina that ſhe believed ſhe had caught cold, ſhe went early to bed, remarkng, as ſhe bade her good night, that Elphinſtone would probably be at home in the morning.

Celeſtina, left alone, went out as was her cuſtom, even although the evening was already cloſed in; and ſtanding on the edge of the rocks, near the houſe, remarked the ſingular appearance of the moon, which was now riſing. It was large and of a dull red, ſurrounded by clouds

clouds of a deep purple, whoſe ſkirts ſeemed touched with flame. Large volumes of heavy vapour were gathering in the ſky, and the heaving ſurges ſwelled towards the ſhore, and broke upon it with that ſullen regularity that foretels a ſtorm. From the North, aroſe diſtinctly the pointed rays of the Aurora Borealis: fiery and portentous, they ſeemed to flaſh like faint lightning a little while, till the moon becoming clearer, rendered them leſs viſible.

Not a ſound was heard but the dull murmurs of the ſea on one ſide and the rapid waterfalls on the other, whoſe encreaſed noiſe foretold with equal certainty an approaching tempeſt. Celeſtina, who was in that diſpoſition of mind to which horrors are congenial, walked ſlowly on notwithſtanding; but quitting the cliffs, on account of the gales of wind which now blew from the ſea, ſhe went along a narrow paſs, where there was a cairn or heap of ſtones looſely piled together, the work of the firſt wild natives of the country; and as that was as far as ſhe thought it proper to venture from the houſe, though it was not more than eight o'clock, ſhe leaned penſively againſt it, and watched with ſome ſurpriſe the fluctuations of the clouds that were wildly driven by the wind acroſs the diſk of the moon, and liſtened with a kind of chill awe, to the loud yet hollow echo of the wind among the hills; which ſometimes ſobbed with ſtormy violence for a moment, and then ſuddenly ſinking, was ſucceeded by a pauſe more terrible.

It was in one of theſe moments of alarming ſilence, that Celeſtina thought ſhe ſaw the ſhadow

dow of a human form for a moment on the ground, as if the perſon was behind her who occaſioned it. She was very little ſubject to fear; but the lonelineſs of the place, and her own deſponding ſpirits together, made her ſtart with terror and turn round. Something immediately glided away; and convinced that the firſt impreſſion had not been the work of fancy, ſhe haſtened with quick ſteps from the place, and hardly at the diſtance of above a hundred yards, ventured to look behind her. She fancied that ſhe ſaw a man ſtanding in the place ſhe had left, and the ſtrange ſuperſtitions of the iſlands, of which ſhe had heard much ſince her reſiding on them, crowding at that moment on her mind, ſhe became extremely terrified, and hurried on with ſuch unguarded ſpeed, that a little before ſhe reached the houſe ſhe trod on a looſe ſtone, that turned under her foot, and ſhe fell with ſome violence and with conſiderable pain; which, together with the fear ſhe had before felt, produced a momentary ſtupor, from which ſhe was awakened by finding herſelf eagerly raiſed from the ground by ſome perſon, who wildly expreſſed his fears for her ſafety, and in whoſe voice ſhe recognized, with aſtoniſhment that deprived her of utterance, Montague Thorold. Surprize at that moment conquered the pain ſhe felt: "Oh! Mr. Montague!" cried ſhe, "is it poſſible? For heaven's ſake what brought you hither?"

"No matter what," replied he eagerly: "think not—aſk not about me!—when you are yourſelf

yourſelf hurt—in pain—bruiſed, I fear, by your fall!"

"I have no hurt ſo great," ſaid Celeſtina, riſing and attempting to walk: "I feel no bodily pain ſo acute, as that which your extraordinary conduct gives me."

"Let me aſſiſt you into the houſe," interrupted he. "Do you not ſee that the tempeſt, which has been gathering the whole evening in the ſouth-weſt, is now driving hither with uncommon fury?"

"And let it come," anſwered ſhe languidly: "I am juſt now ſo very unhappy myſelf—I feel ſo much for the unhappineſs of my friends, particularly of your father, that it is indifferent to me what comes."

"It is not for *me*, at leaſt, that you feel," anſwered he: "that I know but too well: but undoubtedly you will be greatly concerned for poor Elphinſtone, whoſe boat has been beating about ever ſince night-fall, within a mile of the ſhore, at the imminent hazard of being daſhed to pieces."

At this information Celeſtina forgot herſelf, forgot the uneaſy aſtoniſhment into which the unexpected preſence of Montague Thorold had thrown her, and the danger of Elphinſtone occupied all her thoughts. "Oh! where!" cried ſhe, "where is he? Shew me the bark which is in ſo much hazard, and for heaven's ſake call the people, who are not, perhaps, aware of it's danger."

"Alas!" anſwered he, "ſeveral men have been upon the ſhore above half an hour, alarmed,

ed, as I was, at the danger the veſſel was in of ſtriking on the rocks, which ſhe has got among from the unexpected ſhifting of the wind; but in their preſent ſtate no human aſſiſtance can do them any ſervice."

He had, during this dialogue, taken her arm, and led her towards a point of the rock, where ſhe ſaw, by the pale and uncertain light of a moon, wrapped continually in volumes of clouds, the boat ſtruggling among the dark heavy waves which often totally concealed it, and continually driven by the ſudden guſts of violent wind from the point it was attempting to reach.

She now ſaw and ſhuddered at the peril of thoſe who were in it: but ſtill fancying it was poſſible to afford them aſſiſtance, ſhe felt impatient and almoſt angry that Montague Thorold, holding her arm within his, ſtood gazing when ſhe fancied he might be helping. "Why ſtand here," cried ſhe, "when we might be of uſe in ſummoning people to the aſſiſtance of thoſe poor creatures?" While ſhe yet ſpoke, and while Montague, though not leſs alive to their diſtreſs, was leſs ſanguine in the hope to aſſiſt them, and therefore ſtill heſitated, ſhe diſengaged herſelf haſtily from his arm, and flew towards the houſe, no longer conſcious of any thing but their danger: before ſhe could reach it, though the diſtance was not a quarter of a mile, the wind ſuddenly blew with treble fury, and a hail ſtorm accompanied it, againſt which ſhe found it difficult to ſtand. She found the door open, and Mrs. Elphinſtone, whom the wind and the talking of the ſervants had awakened,

kened, already below. Trembling with apprehenſion, which the ſudden appearance of Celeſtina encreaſed—"Good God, my dear friend, what is the matter?" cried ſhe, "and why are you out in ſo dreadful a night?"

"Ah! dear Madam!" replied Celeſtina: "Mr. Elphinſtone—his boat——"

"What of him? interrupted her terrified friend: "is he drowned? is he loſt?"

"No, no! I hope, I believe not," cried Celeſtina; "but a boat, which they ſay is his, is beating off the iſland, and the people are afraid it will go to pieces."

This was enough for the unhappy Mrs. Elphinſtone, who ſeeing, in its moſt dreadful light, the evil which threatened her, now ran herſelf wildly towards the beach; while Celeſtina, overtaking her with difficulty, perſuaded her to accept her aſſiſtance—aſſiſtance which ſhe was very little able to give.

The ſad event had happened before the trembling friends had reached the headland. The boat ſtriking on the ſunken rocks, to ſave it from which the united efforts of the little crew had been exerted in vain, was ſtaved to pieces, and the unhappy men, already exhauſted with fatigue, were unable to reſiſt, by ſwimming, the violence of the ſea. Mrs. Elphinſtone and Celeſtina looked out in vain for the place where a few moments before the boat had been ſeen: no veſtige of it remained, and they ſaw only, by the waining moon, which but ſerved to lend new horrors to the view, the wild waves daſhing over theſe rocks in ſheets of white foam;

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while the fury of the winds and the beating of the rain hardly allowed them to ſtand on the precipice that overlooked the ſcene of ſtormy deſolation.

Celeſtina doubted but little of the calamity, and therefore endeavoured to perſuade her unfortunate friend to return to the houſe; but this was impoſſible: ſhe continued to wander backwards and forwards for ſome moments, till terror quite overcame her; and ſhe threw herſelf on the ground, ſaying, in a low and ſolemn voice to Celeſtina—"Elphinſtone is drowned; I know he is; and here I will wait to ſee his corps, which will be driven on ſhore in the morning." Then ſtarting up, ſhe would have gone down to the ſhore, from an idea which ſuddenly occurred to her that he might yet be ſaved by ſwimming. Celeſtina, not knowing whether it was beſt to prevent or to indulge her, unable to diſſimulate and affect hope ſhe did not feel, was in a ſituation hardly better than that of her diſtracted friend whom ſhe ſupported, when Montague Thorold joined them. Mrs. Elphinſtone, occupied only by the terror of the moment, took no notice of the extraordinary circumſtance of a ſtranger, whom ſhe had never ſeen before, thus ſuddenly appearing; but unconſcious of every thing, and heedleſs of who he was, requeſted in accents of piercing anguiſh his aſſiſtance to help her down the winding path which led to the beach. He lent it, though very certain that the cataſtrophe had already taken place which by her eager and wild enquiries he ſaw ſhe yet thought doubtful;

and

and giving her one arm, while with the other he claſped the trembling hand of Celeſtina, they reached the place, where ſeven or eight men were already aſſembled. The moon was by this time down, and the darkneſs was only broken by livid flaſhes of faint lightning, which, with the thunder muttering at a diſtance, encreaſed the horrors of the ſtorm. Amid the black and ſwelling waves, however, objects were ſeen floating, and many of theſe heavy ſeas had not broken on the ſhore, before theſe objects were diſcerned to be the bodies of thoſe who had periſhed, and that of the ill-fated Elphinſtone was one of the firſt which was thrown on the beach, and too well known by his unhappy wife. She now no longer remembered all the cauſes of uneaſineſs that her huſband had given her; but ſaw only Elphinſtone, once ſo fondly beloved, the poſſeſſor of her firſt affections, the father of her children, a disfigured corpſe before her. Her native ſtrength of underſtanding, and the calmneſs acquired by habitual ſuffering, forſook her at once, and grief produced a momentary phrenzy, during which fearful paroxyſm, Celeſtina, whoſe preſence of mind was now ſummoned to the aſſiſtance of her poor unhappy friend, had her conveyed with great difficulty to the houſe; where Montague Thorold attending them both with the moſt aſſiduous tenderneſs, ſhe watched for many days over the diſordered intellects of the ill fated Mrs. Elphinſtone before ſhe ſaw them reſtored. At length the violence of her affliction, which Celeſtina found means to ſoften by preſenting her children continually to her, and talking

alking to her of thoſe that were abſent, ſunk nto the calm torpor of deſpair. She heard nothing, ſhe ſaw nothing but the children, whom ſhe would not ſuffer to be a moment abſent from her; and the agitation of her mind preying on her ſlender frame, ſhe was reduced to a ſtate of languor which made Celeſtina tremble for her life.

Celeſtina had, immediately after the fatal event, written to Cathcart, deſiring his directions, and even entreating him to come himſelf to fetch them all from a place where there was now no reaſon for their ſtay. But ſhe knew that it muſt be five or ſix weeks before ſhe could have an anſwer; and hardly dared truſt herſelf to meditate on the ſcenes of diſtreſs ſhe muſt in that time encounter.

Amid all the horrors however which had ſurrounded her, ſhe had not forgotten the fears and alarms to which ſhe knew the abſence of Montague Thorold expoſed his father, her benefactor; ſhe ſeized the firſt interval, after the death of Elphinſtone, to urge to him the cruelty of his conduct, and to entreat him to return home; but he replied, that nothing on earth ſhould induce him to leave the place where ſhe was, while there was a probability of his being of uſe to her; and that whether ſhe admitted him to ſee her, or drove her from him, the iſland ſhould be his reſidence while ſhe remained in it. All that then remained for her was, to write to Mr. Thorold, which ſhe did under cover to Cathcart, acquainting him as briefly as ſhe could

of

of the unexpected appearance of his ſon, and all that had happened ſince.

Having thus far acquitted herſelf, ſhe found herſelf in a ſituation in which it was almoſt impoſſible for her to help receiving the aſſiſtance of one to whom ſhe trembled to be obliged, while ſhe knew it encouraged and augmented a paſſion that empoiſoned his life. On him, however, ſhe was compelled to entruſt the regulation of the laſt melancholy offices that were to be performed for poor Elphinſtone, who was interred in a little ruined chapel about two miles from his late reſidence; his wife conſenting reluctantly to this diſpoſition, and taking opiates inceſſantly to procure that torpor which alone prevented the more violent ebullitions of grief from ſeizing her again, when the remains of her huſband were removed.

Recourſe to opiates became gradually a habit with Mrs. Elphinſtone; and though Celeſtina trembled for the conſequences, ſhe thought it almoſt inhuman to oppoſe the application of any remedy, which, under ſuch circumſtances, won her friend from ſorrow even for an hour. Yet the frequent abſences it occaſioned, compelled her to be very long and very often alone with Montague Thorold, to whoſe manly tenderneſs on the late ſad occaſion ſhe could not be inſenſible, and to whoſe unceaſing attention ſhe was every hour more obliged. In the firſt conference they had held when the melancholy event to which they had been witneſſes allowed them to talk of themſelves, Celeſtina, after urging him to return to his father by every motive with which

which reaſon and truth ſupplied her, repeated to him with great firmneſs her reſolution never to marry if Willoughby was not her huſband, and repreſented very forcibly the cruelty as well as abſurdity of his purſuing her; to which he replied, that he knew all ſhe repreſented before he came thither, that his only wiſh was to be allowed to ſee her, though at a diſtance, and his only gratification, that of being ſuffered to breathe the ſame air; that it was the natural privilege of every human being to purſue their happineſs when it injured nobody; and that finding *his* conſiſted in being near her, though without even the hope of her admitting him into her preſence, he had followed that axiom, and had for ſome weeks been the diſtant and unſeen companion of all her walks. "I was the highlander," ſaid he, "who ſupplied the vacancy I had before taken care to make when you went your excurſion on the water. I am the perſon of whom you have ſometimes caught a glimpſe at a diſtance, and who would never have approached you nearer, had not my fears for you the evening of the ſtorm thrown me off my guard, and induced me to conceal myſelf within a few yards of you, behind thoſe piled up ſtones againſt which you leaned. Ah! I heard you ſigh—I heard the name of Willoughby repeated with tenderneſs! but I bore it all! and nothing, believe me, nothing but your fall, your apparent danger, could have compelled me to break the vow I had made never to intrude upon you—never to offend you with my unhappy paſſion!"

Celeſtina

Celeſtina could not help being affected with the melancholy ſolemnity with which he uttered theſe words; but making an effort to prevent his perceiving it, ſhe ſaid—"It is abſolutely neceſſary now that you again take up as much of ſo proper a reſolution as relates to not ſpeaking to me on a topic which to you muſt be uſeleſs, and to me painful; and while you perſiſt in remaining here, let me at leaſt owe it to your complaiſance not to be diſtreſſed by declarations to which I cannot, ought not, will not liſten."

Montague Thorold, then laying his hand on his heart, aſſured her that if ſhe would allow him only to ſee her, indulge him only with being uſeful to her in her preſent remote and comfortleſs reſidence, he never would again name to her the paſſion which he knew, he ſaid, he muſt carry to the grave; and from that moment he kept his word; though Celeſtina ſaw, with more emotion perhaps than the warmeſt declarations could have given her, his painful ſtruggles and continual contention with himſelf: but while her pity for him encreaſed, ſhe ſtudied more carefully to conceal from him that ſhe felt any, and behaved with as much calm politeneſs as ſhe could have done towards the moſt indifferent man in the world.

To beguile the tedious moments during which they were compelled to wait the hoped for arrival of Cathcart, and while the ſea that ſurrounded them was agitated continually by the wintry tempeſt, Celeſtina had recourſe to the books with which poor Elphinſtone, who, among all

all his faults and errors, was not without taſte, had furniſhed a cloſet in the houſe. Mrs. Elphinſtone, moved by the repreſentations of Celeſtina to attend to her health for the ſake of her children, whoſe ſole dependance was now on her, conſented by degrees to liſten while Celeſtina read. Montague Thorold, whoſe reſidence was at the cottage of a highlander that boaſted of having two rooms and a chimney, about a mile farther on the iſland, was ſometimes admitted to theſe parties; and as Celeſtina was ſoon fatigued, and as he read remarkably well, Mrs. Elphinſtone appeared pleaſed with his taking occaſionally the office of their reader, and gradually he became accuſtomed to attend them every afternoon, and to read aloud to them till the hour of their ſimple ſupper.

Among the books in this little collection, there were ſeveral that Celeſtina recollected as the peculiar favourites of Willoughby; and the remembrance of thoſe days when he read them to her, though never a moment abſent from her thoughts, were now moſt forcibly recalled by hearing them again repeated. Some pieces of poetry particularly affected her, from their ſimple pathos, and the manner in which Montague Thorold read them; while they often drew tears from the unhappy Mrs. Elphinſtone, an effect at which Celeſtina rejoiced, as her grief was now ſettled into that ſtill and ſullen melancholy, unſolicitous of conſolation and incapable of receiving it; which, while it produces a degree of apparent calmneſs, preys with fatal power on the heart.

Thus

Thus paſſed the heavy hours; till at length, after a fortnight longer delay than they had reckoned upon, letters were received from Cathcart: they contained intelligence that old Winnington was dead, and Jeſſy in ſuch a ſtate of health as made it almoſt impoſſible for Cathcart to leave her. He therefore beſought Celeſtina to accept the protection of Montague Thorold for herſelf, for Mrs. Elphinſtone, and her children, and to haſten to his houſe, where he was now as able as happy to receive them, as ſoon as was poſſible and ſafe. Mr. Thorold wrote alſo to Celeſtina, and expreſſed his hope that the wild eccentricity of his ſon, which had occaſioned to him ſo much pain, might at leaſt be of ſervice to her, and entreated her to allow him to attend her and her unfortunate friend into Devonſhire, where he aſſured her he would prevent her receiving any trouble from the importunities of Montague, ſhould he be weak enough to preſume too much on her favour. He wrote alſo to his ſon; but after the contents of that letter Celeſtina did not enquire, and Montague carefully concealed them.

It was now determined that the plan laid down by Cathcart and Mr. Thorold ſhould be purſued. Montague undertook the arrangement of every thing, and within ten days they were ready to depart

The weather alone ſeemed now likely to prevent their croſſing the water. Mrs. Elphinſtone, who had till now feared nothing, being ſo apprehenſive for her children, that every guſt of wind, every ſwell of the ſea, made her

ſhrink

ſhrink back with diſmay, and poſtpone from day to day a little voyage which ſhe yet earneſtly wiſhed over. It was the end of November, and very good weather could hardly be expected. Dark and gloomy days, with ſtorms of wind and rain, ſucceeded each other; and Celeſtina, whoſe thoughts had been of late called frequently from her own mournful contemplations to the acute diſtreſſes of others, now relapſed again into that deſponding ſtate of mind which her long abſence from Willoughby and his apparent neglect of her unavoidably threw her into. She had confined herſelf a good deal to the houſe ſince Montague Thorold had been ſo much with them, becauſe there either Mrs. Elphinſtone or the children were uſually in the room, and ſhe by that means avoided being alone with him; but now, as he was more engaged by the preparations for their departure, which he had undertaken to ſuperintend, and in ſettling poor Elphinſtone's accounts with his employers, Celeſtina again ventured out of an evening whenever ſhe could eſcape unſeen.

In one of theſe walks, along the edge of very ſteep rocks, where the ſcene preſented only deſolation: the dark and turbulent ſea on one ſide, and on the other a ſucceſſion of mountains, which ſeemed to have been thrown upon each other in ſome tremendous convulſion of nature, ſhe turned towards the yet more dreary North, and reflected on the condition of thoſe whom the poet deſcribes as

"The laſt of men,"

the

the inhabitants of Siberia, of Lapland, and thoſe extreme regions where

"Life at laſt goes out."

"Alas!" cried ſhe, "if they have not our enjoyments, they ſuffer not from thoſe ſenſibilities which embitter our days. Their ſhort ſummer paſſes in laying up neceſſaries for their long winter; and with what their deſolate region affords them they are content, becauſe they know not that there are comforts and conveniences beyond what it affords them. Void of the wiſh and the power to obſerve other modes of life, they are content with their own, and though little ſuperior in point of intellect to the animal from which they derive their ſupport, yet they are happy, if not from the poſſeſſion of good, at leaſt from the abſence of evil; from that ſickneſs of the ſoul which we taſte from deprivation and diſappointment."

A deep ſigh cloſed this ſhort ſoliloquy; and after indulging a little longer this train of thought, it produced the following ſonnet:

THE LAPLANDER.

The ſhivering native, who by Tenglio's ſide
Beholds with fond regret the parting light
Sink far away, beneath the darkening tide,
And leave him to long months of dreary night,
Yet knows, that ſpringing from the eaſtern wave,
The ſun's glad beams ſhall re-illume his way,
And from the ſnows, ſecur'd within his cave,
He waits in patient hope—returning day.
Not ſo the ſufferer feels, who, o'er the waſte
Of joyleſs life, is deſtin'd to deplore
Fond love forgotten, tender friendſhip paſt,
Which, once extinguiſh'd, can revive no more:

O'er

O'er the blank void he looks with hopeleſs pain;
For him thoſe beams of heaven ſhall never ſhine again.

A few days after this, an interval of calm weather gave to Mrs. Elphinſtone courage to determine on embarking: but the evening before that on which it was finally fixed that they ſhould go, ſhe told Celeſtina, with a ſolemnity of voice and manner that convinced her ſhe was not to be diverted from her purpoſe, that ſhe could not be ſatisfied to leave the iſland without viſiting the ſpot where lay the remains of her huſband. Celeſtina, without much hope of ſucceſs, repreſented to her how wrong it was to yield, or rather to encourage ſorrow, unavailing to its object, and injurious to thoſe who were his living repreſentatives, by depriving her of her calmneſs of mind when exertion was moſt neceſſary, and injuring her own health, now ſo particularly precious to them. To theſe arguments her poor friend replied, with melancholy compoſure, that ſhe ſhould ſuffer more in reflecting on her omiſſion, than ſhe could do in fulfilling what ſhe had perſuaded herſelf was a duty. Celeſtina therefore agreed to accompany her that evening. Montague Thorold had already ſhewn her the place, and Mrs. Elphinſtone deſired to have no other witneſs to her ſorrows, than the ſoft-hearted and pitying friend, without whoſe generous ſympathy ſhe would probably long before have ſunk under them.

It was near two months ſince the death of Elphinſtone, when this melancholy farewel viſit was to be paid by his widow. A calm but ſullen day, with an overclouded ſky, threatening ſnow, was ſucceeded by a dark but mild even-

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ing. The diſtant ſun had left a few lines of red light in the weſtern horizon; and the moon, within a day or two of being at the full, edged with fainter rays the oppoſite clouds, through which it appeared not but at intervals. The unhappy widow, leaning on the arm of her tender friend, walked ſlowly and with languid ſteps, as ſhe was guided towards the ruined chapel, and a univerſal pauſe of nature ſeemed to reſpect her ſorrows! Not a breath of air wandered among the channels of the hills, and the waterfalls murmured low and hollow at a diſtance; the ſea was calm, and being low on the ſands, was hardly heard; while the birds and few animals who inhabited the land, were retired to their repoſe.

Around this little chapel, now more than half in ruins, a few rude ſtones were raiſed to the memory of the dead of former times. The graſs and weeds concealed many, and on the reſt no figures but thoſe of croſſes rudely cut were now viſible. Elphinſtone had been interred within the walls of the edifice itſelf; his widow deſired her friend to enter it with her, to ſhew her the place, and to leave her.

As they approached the ſpot, the ground ſounded hollow beneath their feet, and a mournful echo ran round the damp walls. The moon, darting for a moment through the ruined ſtone work of the diſmantled window, ſhewed them a broken table that had once been the altar, on which ſome pieces of the gothic ornaments of the chapel, and ſeveral human bones, were ſcattered, and near it, the newly turned up earth,

on

on which a few ſtones were looſely piled, diſcovered the grave of poor Elphinſtone. Celeſtina could not truſt her voice to point it out; but leading her friend to it, ſhe immediately comprehended that there lay the remains of her huſband, and fetching a deep ſigh, ſhe ſtopped at it.

"I had better not leave you ſurely," cried Celeſtina mournfully. "I cannot bear to leave you in this dreadful place."

"Pray oblige me," replied her friend; "it is the laſt indulgence I will aſk, and I promiſe not to ſtay long."

"I will wait for you without then," replied Celeſtina; "and pray, dear Sophy, conſider your children, and let it not be long that you indulge this ſad propenſity."

She then went out of the chapel; and ſeating herſelf on one of the ruined monuments near its entrance, yielded to all the gloomy thoughts which the place, the hour, and the occaſion inſpired. "Ah! who knows," cried ſhe, "whether I too may not have reaſon to lament even as this poor mourner, whoſe groans tear my heart to pieces while I liſten to them! I hear her! ſhe implores forgiveneſs of the ſhade of her departed huſband for all the involuntary offences ſhe committed againſt him: ſhe, whoſe whole life has been one courſe of ſuffering, ſolicits forgiveneſs of him to whom thoſe ſufferings were owing: ſhe forgets his faults towards her, and recollects only that he once loved her, that he was the huſband of her youth, and that he is gone for ever; while ſhe trembles for the fu-

ture

ture fate of him, whoſe errors ſhe only remembers to recommend them to mercy! Dreadful then is the final ſeparation even from thoſe, of whom, though we have reaſon to complain, we have once loved: ah! what muſt it be when an eternal barrier is put between us and thoſe whom we unreſervedly and paſſionately love. Willoughby! if I have regretted ſo deeply our ſeparation, what would become of me ſhould I ever hang over the grave where thy adored form moulders in the duſt. Oh! God! grant that I never ſuſtain a trial like that!"

Overwhelmed by theſe ſad thoughts, and terrified at the encreaſing darkneſs and fearful ſilence, which was broken only by the deep ſighs of her unhappy friend proſtrate on the grave of her huſband, ſhe ſtarted up to recall her from her mournful employment, when Montague Thorold, breathleſs with haſte and anxiety, approached her; ſhe was glad to recognize him, and took the hand he offered her; while he cried impatiently—"Wherefore is all this, my dear Madam, and where is your friend?"

Celeſtina led him to the place, ſhuddering as ſhe approached, while Mrs. Elphinſtone, recovering herſelf by an effort of reſolution, and having perhaps diſburthened her oppreſſed heart and ſatisfied her mournful propenſity, agreed immediately to go with them, and having turned once more her ſtreaming eyes on the ſpot as ſhe quitted the chapel, ſhe ſuffered each of her friends to take an arm, and lead her home in ſilence; where Montague Thorold adviſed her and Celeſtina to take immediately a few hours reſt,

reſt, as the tide would ſerve very early in the morning for their embarkation in the veſſel which now lay ready to receive them.

They followed his advice; and before day break on the twentieth of December, near ſeven months after their arrival in the Iſle of Skie, they quitted it; and landing ſafely on the coaſt of Scotland, they proceeded with very great fatigue, though fortunately without being intercepted by ſuch heavy ſnows as they had at ſuch a ſeaſon reaſon to apprehend, to Edinburgh, where it was neceſſary for them to reſt ſome days before they proceeded on their long journey to the other extremity of Great Britain.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER X.

AS Mrs. Elphinſtone was too much dejected to allow her to go out, Celeſtina, who had great pleaſure in viſiting antiquities, and whoſe active mind was perpetually in ſearch of new ideas, was compelled either to relinquiſh theſe gratifications, or to permit Montague Thorold only to accompany her. He was generally ſo guarded in his converſation, that though it was eaſy to ſee how much he ſuffered in ſuppreſſing his paſſion, Celeſtina had no reaſonable ground of complaint. He found, however, at Edinburgh, that it was particularly uneaſy to her to viſit the places ſhe wiſhed to ſee without ſome other companion, and recollecting that one of the profeſſors was well known to his father, he made uſe of the claim that acquaintance gave him, and by that means Celeſtina received all the attention and hoſpitality for which the Scottiſh nation are ſo juſtly praiſed. The gentleman to whom ſhe thus became known, had ſeveral daughters, amiable and elegant young women: with them ſhe ſaw all that the capital of Scotland afforded worthy of obſervation; with them ſhe viſited the ruinous chapel and magnificently mournful apartments of Holyrood Houſe, and gave a ſigh to the fate of the lovely, luckleſs Mary, who was

almoſt its laſt reſident ſovereign. Then parting with her newly-acquired friends with mutual regret, ſhe proceeded on her road to England, nothing particular occurring on the way for ſome time except the ſlow but evident amendment of Mrs Elphinſtone's ſpirits, and the ſymptoms of encreaſed attachment in Montague Thorold; who, if he loved her before with an attachment fatal to his peace and ſubverſive of his proſpects, now ſeemed to idolize her with an ardour bordering on phrenzy. In deſpite of the reſolutions ſhe had avowed to him, in deſpite of thoſe he had himſelf formed, this ardent and invincible paſſion was viſible in every thing he ſaid and did. He ſeemed to have forgotten that he had any other buſineſs in the world than to ſerve her, to liſten to the enchantment of her voice, to watch every change of her countenance. His whole being was abſorbed in that one ſentiment; and though he had promiſed not to conſider the advantages, which his own wild Quixotiſm, aided by accident, had thus obtained for him, as making the leaſt alteration in the decided preference of Celeſtina for another, he inſenſibly forgot, at leaſt at times, her unalterable affection for Willoughby; and ſeeing, notwithſtanding all her attempts to conceal it, that ſhe pitied him, that ſhe was not inſenſible of his attempts to pleaſe her nor blind to his powers of pleaſing, he cheriſhed, in defiance of reaſon and conviction (from which he fled as much as poſſible) the extravagant hope that the barrier, whatever it was, between her and Willoughby, would be found invincible, and that the time, though

though it might yet be remote, would at length arrive when he ſhould himſelf be allowed to aſpire to her favour.

The human mind, however ſtrong, yields too eaſily to theſe illuſions, whence at leaſt it enjoys the ſoft conſolations of hope, and ſees rays of light, which though imaginary, perhaps are all we often have to carry us on with courage over the rugged way, too thickly ſown with real, or, miſſing them, with imaginary and ſelf-created evils.

It is therefore little to be wondered at, if Montague Thorold, ſo ſanguine in temperament, of ſo little experience in life, (for he was yet hardly twenty two) and ſo much in love, ſhould thus eagerly feed himſelf with hopes of its ultimate ſucceſs, and be wilfully deaf to every argument which reaſon would have brought againſt the reality of the gay viſions he cheriſhed.

Celeſtina, pitying and eſteeming him, was very anxious to reduce this unhappy and fruitleſs prepoſſeſſion to the bounds of friendſhip and eſteem, and though ſhe at this time thought of Willoughby with ſo much internal anguiſh that ſhe never on other occaſions willingly named him, yet ſhe now took occaſion ſometimes to ſpeak of him, and purpoſely laid her train of converſation in ſuch a way with Mrs. Elphinſtone, as gave Montague Thorold to underſtand that her ſentiments in regard to him who had firſt poſſeſſed and ſtill was maſter of her heart, could never ſuffer any material change, or be transferred to another, even though ſhe was ſure that ſhe was perſonally divided from him for ever.

After ſome days travelling, which the languor of Mrs. Elphinſtone, and her extreme anxiety about her children, rendered tedious, the party arrived at York, and there it was determined to remain two days. Celeſtina, who had nobody to receive her at the end of her pilgrimage with peculiar delight, was not very eager to finiſh it; Mrs. Elphinſtone, ſeeing nothing but poverty and dependence before her, of which her mind, being enfeebled by grief, was little able to bear a nearer proſpect, was yet leſs anxious; and Montague Thorold cared not how long a journey laſted which gave him what he muſt at its termination loſe, the happineſs of being with, and of being uſeful to the miſtreſs of his heart.

When they arrived at York, there was an appearance of ſnow; it fell with violence during the night, and by ten o'clock the next morning the north road was rendered impaſſable.

The travellers were well aſſured that in a day or two it would be ſufficiently beat for them to proceed with ſafety, and as their original intention was to remain at leaſt two days, the farther immaterial delay with which this circumſtance threatened them, gave to none of them any concern.

The ſnow, however, continued to fall very heavily, and the cold became almoſt inſupportably ſevere. The party were drawn round a good fire at the inn, and Mrs. Elphinſtone had juſt put her children to bed, when an unuſual clamour and buſtle below attracted their attention. Horſes were called for, and a loud voice was heard to ſay—"If four are not ſufficient, my

my maſter will have fourteen rather than be ſtopped a moment."

"This is ſome matrimonial expedition," cried Montague Thorold, "or why all this haſte?" The idea, which the ladies allowed to be probable, excited ſome degree of curioſity, and when the waiter ſoon after came in to lay the cloth for ſupper, Montague could not forbear enquiring if the horſes which were a ſhort time before ſo eagerly called for were not for the accommodation of a young couple haſtening into Scotland. The man replied that the gentleman was going into Scotland, and had been ſtopped by the ſnow about ſeven miles off, the horſes he had to his chaiſe being unable to draw him; but that he underſtood he was quite alone, that horſes and men had been ſent to his aſſiſtance, and that he was expected there preſently.

The man, who probably loved to hear himſelf talk, went on to inform them, though they now no longer felt any great degree of curioſity, that the gentleman's valet de chambre and one of the poſtillions, who had come forward, (who were warming themſelves at the fire below before they returned back as they were ordered,) had declared that they were almoſt dead with cold;" "but as for that, Sir," continued the waiter, "he ſays, that is, Sir, the *valet de ſham* ſays, ſays he, my maſter if once he've got a ſcheme in his head, 'tis not cold, no nor water, nor fire neither, *as* will find it an eaſy matter to ſtop him, and then, ſays he, as for fatigue to his own ſelf, ſays he; or danger, or any thing

of

of the like nature, or expence, though it coſt him a hundred, aye or a thouſand pounds, why my maſter, ſays he, minds it no more than nothing; 'tis all one to him; yet to be ſure, ſays he, he is a good maſter in the main, and no ſneaker, neither in money, nor liquor, nor no other accommodation to ſervants."

"And pray," ſaid Montague Thorold, "who is this courageous, bountiful, and accommodating gentleman?"

"I did not think to aſk his name, Sir," replied the waiter, "but I can know in a minute." He then, without waiting for an anſwer, ran down ſtairs, and returning almoſt inſtantly, ſaid that the gentleman was 'Squire Vavaſour of Staffordſhire.

"Vavaſour!" cried Celeſtina in a faint voice, and turning as pale as death. "Good Heaven! to what purpoſe can Vavaſour be travelling in ſuch haſte towards Scotland."

"Vavaſour!" echoed Montague Thorold, his countenance betraying all that paſſed in his heart: "Vavaſour! Ah! Miſs de Mornay, it was to you he was undoubtedly going. Willoughby is returned, and ſends his friend to reclaim his betrothed wife."

"Sends his friend! oh! no, no," anſwered Celeſtina with quickneſs, "that cannot be: were Willoughby returned, he would not *ſend*; rather it is ſome ſad news he has to impart, and I muſt prepare myſelf for it—I muſt bear it be it what it may."

The cruelleſt anxiety now took poſſeſſion of both Celeſtina and Montague Thorold; they both

both dreaded an explanation, though unable to bear the ſuſpenſe. Thorold went down to ſee what he could gather from the men; but Mr. Vavaſour's ſervant was gone back to meet his maſter, and the poſtillion had only come with him from the laſt poſt town. Celeſtina in the mean time now traverſed the room, now went to the window, and now appeared to attend to the conjectures Mrs. Elphinſtone offered, that perhaps this journey might in no reſpect relate to her, but might be owing to one of thoſe ſudden ſtarts of caprice in which Vavaſour was known to indulge himſelf.

This ſtate of ſuſpenſe and conjecture, which is of all others leaſt eaſy to be borne, did not laſt long, for in about a quarter of an hour the carriage, in which Vavaſour himſelf was, arrived.

Celeſtina now debated within herſelf whether ſhe ought to ſend to him, to inform him of her being on her way to England, or ſuffer him to proceed, whither ſhe doubted not he was going, even to the Hebrides in ſearch of her. This internal debate was however ſhort: her extreme ſolicitude to have news of Willoughby ſuperſeded every other thought; and whether Vavaſour was going to Scotland to announce her fate to her by the direction of Willoughby, or merely in conſequence of ſome whim of his own, ſhe knew that he in all probability could give her ſome intelligence of him of whom ſhe moſt wiſhed to hear. Montague Thorold, who trembled leſt in conſequence of this interview all the day dreams in which he had been indulging

ing himſelf ſhould be at once deſtroyed, would have repreſented to her ſome imaginary improprieties which his wiſh to find them raiſed in his mind.

Celeſtina, however, had, with all her candour and humility, a deciſive ſpirit, the effect of her great good ſenſe, which, when ſhe had once examined and determined on any ſubject, did not leave her open to the trifling perplexities of feeble and unimportant debate. She conſidered, that even if Vavaſour *was* going on ſome eccentric idea of his own to follow her into Scotland, it would be cruel and unjuſt to ſuffer him to purſue ſuch a journey at ſuch a ſeaſon, and therefore ſteadily reſiſting all the repreſentations of Montague Thorold againſt it, ſhe addreſſed to him the following note:

"Miſs de Mornay preſents her compliments
"to Mr. Vavaſour, and having learned by ac-
"cident that he is at this place, requeſts the
"favour of ſeeing him to-morrow morning to
"breakfaſt with Mrs. Elphinſtone and with her
"at half paſt nine."

Montague Thorold, being unable wholly to prevent, thought he could at leaſt impede the delivery of this note till the next day; but Celeſtina was too impatient to hear of Willoughby to be blind to the artifice which Montague was too much in love to manage very dexterouſly, and therefore quitting the room herſelf, ſhe found one of the waiters, whom ſhe enjoined to give the note to the gentleman who was juſt arrived, as ſoon as he had done ſupper.

This

This was not perhaps very diſcreet: but Celeſtina thought much at the moment of Willoughby, and very little of Vavaſour, and in her anxiety to hear news of the one, ſhe reflected not on the way in which it might be conveyed by the other, who, after a long and cold journey, having finiſhed his ſupper, was not likely at leaſt to be a clear and calm meſſenger, and a moment's reflection would have convinced her that he was not a man who from motives of delicate forbearance and polite deference would put off the interview to the time ſhe had named.

No ſooner was the note from Celeſtina delivered to Vavaſour, than he ran up ſtairs with an impatience amounting almoſt to phrenzy, his eyes flaſhing fire, and his countenance expreſſive of the violent emotions with which he was agitated; he hardly noticed Mrs. Elphinſtone, but caſting a look of angry ſurpriſe at Montague Thorold, whom he immediately knew, he approached Celeſtina, took her hand, and eagerly kiſſing it, told her in a hurried manner that he was haſtening to Scotland to give her intelligence of very great conſequence, and to deliver her a packet from Willoughby.

"From Willoughby!" replied Celeſtina, ſo extremely affected by his abrupt entrance that ſhe was ready to faint. "Is he well? is he returned to England?"

"No," replied he, without ſeeming ſenſible of the nature of her ſufferings, "not returned to England, or likely to return, but——"

"Is he married then?" ſaid Celeſtina, interrupting him in a ſtill more trembling voice.

"Not yet, but I have a letter for you which——"

"Give it me," cried ſhe, hardly able to breathe. He had it not about him, but ringing for his ſervant, gave him the key of his portmanteau, and bidding him bring a large ſealed packet, which he ſaid he would find there, the man immediately returned with it; and Celeſtina, without ſpeaking to Vavaſour, hurried away with it in breathleſs agitation, Mrs. Elphinſtone, alarmed at her looks, following her in ſilence.

All this time Montague Thorold had remained leaning againſt one of the piers: with contracted brows and claſped hands watching the countenance of Celeſtina, while his own changed from pale to red, from red again to pale. He had always returned the diſlike which Vavaſour had ſhewn towards him as much as his nature could return diſlike: and this was encreaſed by the abrupt and unfeeling manner in which Vavaſour had executed a commiſſion, that, whether it brought to her welcome or unwelcome tidings, demanded, he thought, more delicacy and more preparation. When Celeſtina and Mrs. Elphinſtone were gone, he felt no inclination therefore to ſtay with Vavaſour, who walked up and down the room as if expecting their return; but was preparing to leave it, when, as he croſſed to the door, Vavaſour, turning ſhort towards him, aſked how he came to be at York with Miſs De Mornay.

"How

"How I came, Sir!" replied Montague Thorold with equal abruptneſs. "Have *you* any right, Sir, to enquire?"

"Yes," replied Vavaſour contemptuouſly, "I have a right."

"To enquire into my actions, Sir?" interrupted Thorold; "ſurely not!"

"To enquire into thoſe of Miſs De Mornay, Sir, *I have* a right."

"Well, Sir, if ſhe allows of that right, to her you may then apply; but you will be ſo good as to leave me at liberty to be at York, or wherever elſe it is convenient to me to be."

"Not with her, Sir, you muſt not; not with Miſs De Mornay, be aſſured. As for the reſt, pray underſtand, that were it not for the circumſtance of your being ſeen in company with her, *I* ſhould never recollect that ſuch a perſon was in the world as Mr. Montague Thorold.

Thorold though naturally of a gentle diſpoſition, was little diſpoſed to bear the contemptuous arrogance of any man: he therefore anſwered with more quickneſs, that it was an honour he could well diſpenſe with, to be thought of at all by *ſuch* a man as Mr. Vavaſour. The tone in which he ſpoke this, and the emphaſis he laid on the words *ſuch* a man, provoked the haughty and impetuous ſpirit of Vavaſour; and words roſe ſo high between them, that Mrs. Elphinſtone, who was only in the next room, came in, and extremely terrified at their violence, beſought them to ſeparate. Vavaſour, whoſe paſſions were at all times too ſtrong to ſuffer him

him to liſten either to reaſon from others or to his own, gave very little attention to her remonſtrances; but Montague Thorold, on ſeeing her extreme uneaſineſs, and on hearing the name of Celeſtina, became in a moment apparently calm; and aſſuring Mrs. Elphinſtone that ſhe had no reaſon to be alarmed, he addreſſed himſelf coolly to Vavaſour, and ſaid, that if he had any buſineſs with him he would be at his ſervice in the morning: he then beſought Mrs. Elphinſtone to return to Celeſtina; and taking her hand, led her out of the room, aſſuring her in a whiſper that he would not return that evening to Vavaſour, nor have any farther contention with him. "Make yourſelf eaſy, therefore, my dear Madam," ſaid he, "and tell me—how is our lovely friend? what are the contents of a letter which required ſo extraordinary a meſſenger?"

Mrs. Elphinſtone anſwered, that Celeſtina had appeared in great emotion while ſhe read the beginning of the letter, and then telling her that ſhe ſhould finiſh it in her own room, had left her, in encreaſed agitation ſhe thought, but without tears.

"And ſhall you ſee her no more to-night?" enquired Montague Thorold.

"I rather believe not," replied Mrs. Elphinſtone.

"And do you think," ſaid Thorold, "do you think, my dear Madam, that the agitation, the emotion you remarked, was the effect of joy, of grief——"

"Of

"Of grief, of diſappointment, of regret, I think," anſwered ſhe. "I believe Celeſtina is now convinced that every probability of her becoming the wife of Mr. Willoughby is at an end for ever."

"Then," cried Montague Thorold, unable to repreſs the violence of his feelings; "oh! then there will be hope for me!"

There was ſomething like the tranſports of phrenzy in the manner in which he uttered this, and Mrs. Elphinſtone was ſhocked at it. "Be not too ſanguine, Mr. Montague," ſaid ſhe. "I do not believe that the affections of Miſs De Mornay are to be eaſily or lightly transferred, but if they were, think of the powerful claims upon them that are uſing againſt your's."

"Claims! what claims?" cried he; "who ſhall dare to diſpute with me an heart to which——"

"Nay, nay," anſwered Mrs. Elphinſtone, "this is all phrenzy and wildneſs. Do you not know that you have no claim, though I am willing to allow all your merit; and do you not ſee that Willoughby, in being compelled to reſign her, recommends his friend Vavaſour to her favour, and therefore ſends him hither."

"Vavaſour!" cried he: "recommend Vavaſour to her! And would Celeſtina, who with all that dignified gentleneſs, has a great deal of ſpirit, with a proper conſciouſneſs of her own value; would ſhe bear to be conſigned, like a bale of merchandiſe, to a friend, and to ſuch a man as Vavaſour? Impoſſible! he dare not think

think of it: but I wiſh he may, for her inſulted pride will mitigate the pain of her diſappointed love, and ſhe will be mine—the charmer will be mine."

The look, the manner in which this was uttered, encreaſed the concern of Mrs. Elphinſtone, who, from her own recent and ſevere ſufferings, had learned to dread any thing like romantic eccentricity. She laid her ſoft cold hand on the burning hands of Montague Thorold, as they were wildly claſped together—"My dear Sir," ſaid ſhe, in the gentleſt accents, "I owe you a thouſand obligations for all the attention you ſhewed me in my late calamitous ſituation, and ill, very ill, ſhould I repay thoſe obligations, if I did not try as a friend to mitigate theſe violent tranſports. Believe me, the heart of Celeſtina, fixed in her early life to one object, is attached to that object with more than common firmneſs: Vavaſour's frantic fondneſs, and your real merit, will, in my opinion, be equally indifferent to her; and I verily believe, that if Willoughby marries another, as I conclude he will, Miſs De Mornay will never marry at all."

Montague Thorold could not bear this. The idea of rivalry had been painful; but the pain was mitigated by his knowledge of her character and of the character of Vavaſour, which, with all its avowed libertiniſm, he knew Celeſtina could not even tolerate, and certainly not approve: but the idea of her living only for Willoughby, even when Willoughby lived for another, was inſupportable, and ſince he was unwilling

ling to own it was poſſible, he would therefore have been ready to quarrel with any body but Mrs. Elphinſtone for ſuppoſing it probable: but to every being who was unfortunate, and eſpecially if that unfortunate being was a woman, the kind heart of Montague Thorold overflowed with good will and ſympathy: he therefore checked himſelf; and ſaying he ſhould be impatient to hear of Miſs De Mornay in the morning, he wiſhed Mrs. Elphinſtone a good night, and left her.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XI.

IT was not till after two or three readings, with a palpitating heart—a heart ſo much agitated as hardly to leave her the uſe of her reaſon, that Celeſtina perfectly underſtood the meaning of Willoughby's letter, which ran thus:

"The only apology, dear Celeſtina, that the "unhappy Willoughby has to offer for his con- "duct is, to relate to you all that has befallen "him ſince that fatal night when he parted "from you at Alveſtone. The emotions which "I muſt feel while I write, I will endeavour "to ſuppreſs, both for your ſake and my own; "it ſhall be, if I can command myſelf, a hiſ- "tory of events rather than of the ſufferings "to which thoſe events have condemned me.

"You know, that after the abrupt and unac- "countable note that I received, I haſtened to the "inn at Exeter, where I was informed ſome per- "ſons, who had buſineſs of the utmoſt import- "ance which admitted not of a moment's delay, "waited to ſee me. The terms in which the

"note

" note was written were ſuch as gave me a " ſtrange alarm, though I knew not what to " dread. This uneaſy aſtoniſhment was not " leſſened, when, after much appearance of " myſtery, I was introduced to—Lady Caſtle- " north.

" You know the woman, and can imagine " how ill her harſhneſs, when irritated by the " malignity of diſappointed pride, was calcu- " lated to ſoften the blow which it was her " pleaſure to give me herſelf. She told me, " that having heard I was on the following " morning to become your huſband, ſhe felt it to " be her duty to ſave me from the horrors of ſuch " a union, by informing me that ſhe knew you " to be the daughter of my mother, the daugh- " ter of that Mr. Everard who was my tutor, " and that the woman ſhe had with her, who " had been a ſervant in the houſe at the time, " could give the moſt indiſputable account of " your birth.

" Stunned as by a ſtroke of thunder, I turned " towards the woman, of whoſe face as a ſer- " vant of my mother's I had not the leaſt re- " collection. I know not what I ſaid to her; " I only remember that ſhe gave, in a confuſed " and vulgar way, an account of what ſhe pre- " tended to have been witneſs to. I ſuffered her " to talk on, for my very ſoul was ſinking with " anguiſh. My mother's honour deſtroyed! my " Celeſtina torn from me! My ſoul recoiled from " the idea as from an execrable falſhood. Yet " when I remembered the ſolemn injunction " that beloved mother gave me in her laſt mo-

" ments

" ments to marry Miſs Fitz-Hayman, the pro-
" miſe ſhe drew from me never otherwiſe to
" unite myſelf—when my agonized mind ran
" back to the diſpleaſure ſhe ſometimes expreſ-
" ſed at my fondneſs and admiration for you—
" I dared not, with all the pain and all the hor-
" ror I felt, I dared not throw from me with in-
" dignation this odious intelligence; I dared
" not load the hateful communicators of it with
" the odium which would have been dictated by
" my ſwelling heart, had it not been checked
" by theſe ſad recollections, which preſſed upon
" me in deſpite of myſelf, and gave me ſome-
" thing like internal evidence of the facts I would
" very fain have denied.

" There was, in the countenance of Lady
" Caitlenorth, ſomething of inſolent triumph
" which I could not bear. She made a merit
" of her diſintereſted conduct; and talked of
" virtue, and honour, and integrity, till I was
" blind and deaf: ſhe then threw out ſome reflec-
" tions on my mother's memory, which rouſed
" me from the torpor of amazement and ſor-
" row to reſentment; ſhe uttered ſome malig-
" nant ſarcaſms againſt you, and I flew from her.

" She had, however, completely executed
" her purpoſe, if it was that of rendering me
" the moſt wretched of human beings; and
" in quitting the houſe, which ſhe did ſoon af-
" terwards, had the barbarous pleaſure of
" knowing that ſhe had deſtroyed my peace for
" ſome time—if not for ever.

" To return to you, Celeſtina, under the
" doubts which diſtracted me was impoſſible.
" To become your huſband—ſo lately the fond-

" eſt,

" eſt, the firſt wiſh of a heart that doated upon
" you, was not to be thought of, while ideas
" of ſo much horror obtruded themſelves on
" my mind: yet to leave you without account-
" ing for my abſence, to leave you to all
" the torturing ſuſpenſe of vague conjectures,
" to leave you to ſuppoſe I had deceived and
" forſaken you, was cruel, was unpardonable:
" it was, however, what, after a long and
" dreadful ſtruggle, I determined to do. I
" might, indeed, have put an end to your con-
" jectures by delivering you over to others
" more tormenting—by communicating the
" doubts Lady Caſtlenorth had raiſed; but this
" I found I could leſs bear to do than even to
" leave you wholly in ſuſpenſe. Believing her
" capable of any thing which revenge or malice
" could dictate, there was reaſon, notwith-
" ſtanding all my trembling apprehenſions, to
" ſuppoſe it more than poſſible that ſhe might
" have invented the ſtory, and have bribed the
" woman with her to give evidence of its
" truth. To this poſſibility my mind clung
" with the eagerneſs of a drowning wretch;
" and I could not reſolve to ſully before you
" the memory of my angel mother, which I
" know you hold in ſuch tender veneration; I
" could not determine to raiſe in your delicate
" and ſenſible mind doubts and terrors which
" might make ſuch fatal impreſſions as might
" impede our union, even if the fallacy of this
" invention to divide us was detected. In a
" ſtate of mind then which I will not attempt
" to deſcribe, I at length determined to ſend
" for Cathcart, and without explaining even to

" him

" him the motives of my ſudden journey, to
" ſecure, if I could, your continuance at Al-
" veſtone, and to ſet out myſelf to diſcover
" the real circumſtances of your birth; and ne-
" ver to return till I had the moſt thorough con-
" viction that you were not the daughter of my
" mother, or till I could learn to conſider you,
" if it were ſo—only as a beloved ſiſter.

" Ah! Celeſtina! I little knew the taſk I un-
" dertook; yet with anguiſh and depreſſion, to
" which no words can do juſtice, I ſet about
" it. My firſt ſtep was, to find out Watſon,
" my mother's old ſervant, who had never, I
" knew, left her for many years. I knew that
" after her death, and on receiving the legacy
" of fifty pounds that her miſtreſs left her, ſhe
" had retired to the houſe of her ſon, who was
" married and ſettled at Whitehaven. I might
" have written to have enquired after her: but
" then I muſt have waited ſome days in ſuſpenſe
" I could not bear; and while I was in motion
" I felt my miſery leſs, from an idea that I was
" doing ſomething to end it. I ſat out therefore
" on horſeback for Whitehaven, and on my arri-
" val there learned that ſhe had been dead about
" ſix weeks. This firſt hope of certainty thus
" fruſtrated, it occurred to me that perhaps
" among her papers there might be ſome me-
" morandums that would be uſeful; and as ſhe
" always hired and diſcharged the inferior ſer-
" vants, and kept an account of the time and
" terms of their ſervice in a book, I flattered
" myſelf that I might find ſome date of the
" time when Hannah Biſcoe, who pretended to
" have been in her confidence and to have been

" entruſted

" entruſted with a ſecret of ſuch importance,
" really lived in the family.

" I told her ſon, that to ſee all the papers
" his mother had left, was of importance to
" me. He readily brought all he had. There
" were ſome books of accounts, and ſome me-
" morandums about ſervants, but none that gave
" me any light, or were of any importance to
" my enquiry, for none went back above ten
" years. The man told me there were more;
" but that not knowing they were of any con-
" ſequence, or even ſuppoſing them likely to
" be called for, he had given them to his
" children, who had cut them to pieces. ' I
" believe, however, Sir, ſaid he, that there
" are ſome letters in a drawer of a bureau,
" which I remember to have ſeen during my
" mother's illneſs: I will fetch them if you think
" they will be of any ſervice.'

" I deſired him to do ſo, and he brought me
" about twenty letters: ſome of them were
" from my mother, while ſhe was in London
" in the years 1779 and 1780, and Watſon
" was at Alveſtone with you and my ſiſter, of
" whom ſhe had, as you well remember, the
" care on all occaſions where it was neceſſary for
" my mother to be abſent. You were then a-
" bout nine, and Matilda about eleven years old.
" The only ſentences of any kind of conſequence
" were theſe:

' I have no notion of any real danger from the
' landing of troops from the fleets of France and
' Spain. No landing can take place; and 'tis
' all nonſenſe and bravado. I thought you had
' more ſenſe, Watſon, than to catch the panic

' of

'of the vulgar and the ignorant, which *they* rather like to communicate. However, ſince you write ſo preſſingly to know what ſhould be done if any thing ſhould happen, I give you an anſwer, firſt, that nothing will happen; and ſecondly, if you have any alarm, which a reaſonable being would conſider ſuch, take *my* two girls and bring them up hither inſtantly. But I ſhall be down at Alveſtone in about ten days, and nothing can happen within that time believe me.'

"*My two girls*, was the only ſentence in this "letter on which I could lay any ſtreſs. *My* "two girls! Well, and what then? have I "not heard my mother a thouſand times ſay, "*my* two girls? *My Matilda, my Celeſtina*, were "names indiſcriminately uſed: my *children*; "even my *daughters*, were terms not unfre- "quent with her. Ah! little, little did her "generous and benevolent heart ſuppoſe that "*ſuch* advantage might be taken of that gene- "roſity—of that benevolence; for now—even "now—no—I do not, I cannot, I will not be- "lieve, that Celeſtina has any other claim to "her friendſhip, to her protection, than what "aroſe from that generoſity and benevolence. "Now, do I ſay?—can I ſay it? Oh heaven! "how dreadfully contradictory are the ſenti- "ments that agitate and tear my heart!

"Let me, however, recall my ſcattered "thoughts: and remember, that it is a ſimple "hiſtory of facts only, and not of feelings, "that I promiſed to relate.

"Another

"Another letter was written to Watſon, "when Mr. Everard, after a very tedious ill-"neſs, which had long confined him in town, "went down to Alveſtone in the year eighty, "for change of air, rather than to his own par-"ſonage, where ſome repairs were then going "on. This letter was expreſſive of great ſoli-"citude and anxiety: but from thence what "could be inferred? nothing but that the dear "and benevolent writer was ſolicitous for the "health of a friend to whom ſhe had long been "attached. There was not in this a word on "which the moſt invidious obſerver could "dwell; nor was there in any other letter a "ſyllable to give me any confirmation of what "I dreaded to find. Still I procured from the "perſon who had ſucceeded to Watſon's effects, "every paper and every book that remained; "but I found nothing; and returned to Lon-"don as miſerable, as diſſatisfied as I left "it.

"Nothing made me more wretched than the "queſtions with which I was now perſecuted. "I fled from ſociety; ſtopped at a ſmall village "in the neighbourhood of London, where I "avoided every body who was likely to know "me, and thought only how I might ſatisfy "my own torturing doubts, and eſcape thoſe "of others.

"The moſt obvious method ſeemed to be, to "find out the woman who had accompanied "Lady Caſtlenorth, and queſtion her when ſhe "was no longer under the influence of her em-"ployer: but this I could not do without get-

"ting

" ting, at my uncle's houſe, information which " I knew not how to ſet about. To go there, " was hateful to me. I could not now bear " the ſight of people whom I had never loved, " and to whom I imputed all the miſery I la- " boured under.

" My ſervant Farnham had been little uſed " to thoſe ſort of negociations, and knew not " much better than I did, how to ingratiate " himſelf into the favour of the perſons, " through whoſe means only he could procure " the intelligence ſo neceſſary to us. He went, " however, about it as well as he could; but " all I learned was, that Lady Caſtlenorth had, " ſoon after her journey into Devonſhire, ſent " the woman who accompanied her away into " her native country, which was either Nor- " folk or Suffolk, and with ſo much ſecrecy " that nobody knew whither ſhe was gone, or " how ſhe was provided for: but Farnham " with ſome difficulty drew from the reſt of the " ſervants, with whom he found means of con- " verſing, that ſhe had boaſted, in ſome mo- " ments of vulgar exultation, that her fortune " was made for ever.

" No clue, however, could I obtain by which " I could find out this woman; and after much " fruitleſs enquiry, where the art of the adver- " ſary with whom I had to engage baffled all " my aſſiduity, I determined to go to Lord " Caſtlenorth, to ſtate to him the ſtigma that " his wife had thrown on the honour of my " mother, his ſiſter, and to demand that I " might have proofs of the facts ſhe alledged,

" ſuch

" ſuch as ſhe could now give, or that ſhe might
" acknowledge the wickedneſs and injuſtice of
" her aſperſions.

" I was not aware, till I converſed with Lord
" Caſtlenorth, to how debilitated a ſtate indo-
" lence, ignorance, pride, and prejudice, can
" reduce the human mind. His, however,
" was of ſo ſingular a caſt, that inſtead of being
" ſhocked at the injury done to his ſiſter's ho-
" nour, he affected to reſent, in ſpite of his fa-
" mily pride, my doubts of his wife's veracity,
" flew from the point to which I attempted to
" bring him, and we parted in mutual diſguſt:
" at leaſt I was diſguſted, and more wretched
" and more hopeleſs than before I had made
" this attempt.

" Every effort to diſcover the retreat of the
" woman failing, my next meaſure was to go
" to the convent at Hieres. It was owing to
" theſe cruel circumſtances, Celeſtina, that I
" left you in doubt while I remained in Eng-
" land; it was owing to theſe, that I left Eng-
" land in the hope—though it became every
" day more mingled with apprehenſion—that I
" left England without accounting to you for
" my conduct. Were theſe ſurmiſes ground-
" leſs, why ſhould I empoiſon your delicate
" mind? why ſhould I ſully for a moment the
" ſacred fame of my mother by divulging them?
" were they found to be at length too well ſub-
" ſtantiated, it would be then time enough to
" inform you of them.

" On my arrival at Hieres, I went directly
" to the preſent Confeſſor of the community

" out of whoſe care my mother took you. " I found him to be intelligent, obliging, and " officious. From him I learned, that the pre- " ſent Superior was a young woman of good " family, who had been compelled to take " the veil, and who would probably have very " few real ſcruples as to giving me all the infor- " mation ſhe could.

" I ſucceeded eaſily in my reſearch, as far " as it depended on theſe two perſons. I found " that the memorandum of my mothers's having " taken you out of the convent, by the name " of Celeſtina de Mornay, remained; and I " found, with emotions on which I muſt not " dwell, that there was another memoran- " dum of expences, ' for the little *Engliſh* " child, received at the requeſt of Madame " de P———.' Such is the literal ſenſe of " the French words. Who then was this " Madame de P———? An old nun, who " had lived in the houſe about five and twenty " years, and was the only perſon who recol- " lected any circumſtances of your reception, " told me that ſhe well remembered that this " Madame de P——— came from Bayonne, " or ſome part of the country in the neighbour- " hood of that town; and that ſhe was an in- " timate friend of the then Abbeſs, and her " name, of which only the initials were ex- " preſſed in the memorandum, was le Marquiſe " de Pellatier.

" I enquired of the old nun, if ſhe knew on " what ground it was you were repreſented as " an Engliſh child? ſhe replied, that ſhe knew

" no

" no more than that when firſt you were re-
" ceived under the care of the Superior, you
" were ſaid to be the child of Engliſh parents,
" or at leaſt that one of your parents was of that
" nation: but that ſoon afterwards this was, by
" the Abbeſs's authority, contradicted; it was
" forbidden to be mentioned in the community;
" and it was ordered that you ſhould from that
" time be ſpoken of as Mademoiſelle de Mor-
" nay; while intimations were given that you
" were a relation of her own; born of a con-
" cealed marriage; and that your father being
" dead, and your mother married to another per-
" ſon, you were to be conſidered as belonging
" only to the community in which you were
" deſtined to paſs your life.

" Ah! Celeſtina! what food was here for
" thoſe corroſive conjectures which preyed on
" my heart. Having exhauſted however, every
" kind of information which it was here poſſible
" to procure, I ſet out for Bayonne; where
" ſome of the family at leaſt of Madame de
" Pellatier were, I underſtood, to be found.

" She had herſelf been dead ſome years. I
" met, however, with her ſon, a gay young
" man of four or five and twenty, from whom
" I could obtain nothing but a general confeſſi-
" on that his mother probably had, from the
" general tenor of her life, occaſion in more
" than one inſtance to exerciſe the ſecrecy and
" kind offices of her friends, and very probably
" obliged them in her turn: and when I explain-
" ed to him my reaſons for the anxious enqui-
" ries I made, which I thought the only means

" likely to intereſt him for me, he ſaid that he " was '*vraiment au deſeſpoir*' at the little *embarras* " into which I had fallen: that la belle demoiſelle " might be my ſiſter or might be his; that he " had not the leaſt hope of being of ſervice to " me in unravelling the myſtery, for he had " deſtroyed all his mother's papers in purſuance " of her dying directions ſome years before, and " did not believe the ſlighteſt trace remained of " any connection with an Engliſh lady, or an " Engliſh family. I enquired where his mother " lived in the years 1770 and 1771, which was " about the time of your birth, and where in the " year 1772, the time of your reception in the " convent; he replied that ſhe was then ſome- " times at Paris, where ſhe was believed to " have an arrangement with Count W——, a " German nobleman, ſometimes at Pezenas and " ſometimes at Hieres. From all this I could " gather nothing to my purpoſe; and Monſieur " de Pellatier ſoon quitting his houſe in the " neighbourhood of Bayonne to go to Paris, I " returned thither alſo, infinitely more unhappy " than before my reſearch.

" All I have related, Celeſtina, is ſo little " convincing when it is put together, that per- " haps I ought not to lay any ſtreſs upon it, " when to ſuch ſlight and unſatisfactory ground " of conjecture, is oppoſed the character and " the principles of my mother; yet ſhall I tell " you truly, that the energy with which ſhe " preſſed me with her laſt words to marry Miſs " Fitz-Hayman: the diſpleaſure ſhe always " ſhewed at my expreſſing any partiality towards

" you;

" you; her grief at the death of Mr. Everard,
" which it was eaſy to ſee ſhe never recovered;
" ſome words which, though I could not clearly
" underſtand them, eſcaped her lips almoſt with
" her laſt ſigh; and in which the name of Ce-
" leſtina ſeemed united with ſome ardent prayer,
" or ſome earneſt injunction, while, in her cold
" convulſed hand, ſhe preſſed mine to her
" trembling lips; oh! Celeſtina! thoſe ſounds
" I have ſince interpreted into a confeſſion of
" this fatal ſecret. Still, ſtill inarticulate as
" they were, they vibrate on my heart: and
" now, united with the ſtory of Lady Caſtlenorth,
" and the circumſtances I have gathered of your
" being born of Engliſh parents—all, all unite
" to render me wretched.

" Yet there is not the leaſt likeneſs between
" you and my mother; there is not the re-
" moteſt reſemblance between you and Mr.
" Everard, who had remarkably ſtrong features
" and very red hair: oh! Celeſtina! what am
" I conjecture? what am I to do? can I, ought
" I, on ſuch grounds, to reſign you? Can
" I ever learn to conſider you only as my ſiſter?
" Where ſhall I go next? how ſatisfy my
" doubts? how ever poſſeſs again a moment's
" happineſs?

" Every other evil is light to this. Even
" the diſorder of my affairs, the neceſſity I
" ſhall ſoon be in to ſell Alveſtone, is hardly
" felt. On my leaving England, I raiſed money
" at an enormous premium in order to pay Va-
" vaſour what I could not bear to owe him,
" uncertain as I was what would become of
" me.

" me. This, together with my abſence, has
" alarmed ſome of my mortgagees, who talk of
" foreclоſing their mortgages; while my own
" neglect of my affairs has, in deſpite of Cath-
" cart's aſſiduity, contributed to my embarraſſ-
" ments. But what are theſe inferior diſtreſſes,
" compared to the wretchedneſs of a heart,
" adoring Celeſtina, yet afraid of indulging his
" paſſion leſt it lead him into guilt? Ah! every
" evil fortune could inflict, but this, I could
" bear.

" But again it is neceſſary to recall my pen
" from the deſcription of feelings to the narra-
" tive of facts.

" Lord and Lady Caſtlenorth and their
" daughter arrived in the early part of the ſum-
" mer in France. I was then abſent on the re-
" ſearch I have related to you, but heard they
" had been very earneſt in their enquiries after
" me at Paris; and on my return thither, ſome
" months afterwards, I received a letter from
" Lord Caſtlenorth, earneſtly deſiring me to
" join them at Florence or Naples. The letter
" imported that the alliance he once wiſhed
" was no longer in queſtion; but that finding
" his health every day declining, he wiſhed to
" ſee the only male relation he had, on the ſet-
" tlement of ſome family concerns.

" This invitation I ought not perhaps on
" other accounts to have refuſed; but the hope
" of being able to gain ſome farther intelligence
" of the circumſtances which occupied my mind
" inceſſantly, determined me at once to accept
" it. I went then, and met them at Florence,

" where

" where my uncle received me with as much
" overacted civility, as when we parted laſt he
" had treated me with ſupercilious ſcorn.

" I found him, however, not more reaſona-
" ble than before: the prejudices that had taken
" poſſeſſion of his mind were ſo ſtrong that he
" was angry and amazed that what made the
" whole buſineſs of his life could be to any
" other perſon matters of mere indifference.
" He talked to me inceſſantly of remedies for
" the gout, of the medicines he was taking, and
" of their effects; told me how he ſlept and
" how he eat; and read diſſertations without
" end on chronic diſorders in general; and from
" this diſcourſe he glided by ſome link which
" eſcaped me, into his other favourite ſcience,
" heraldry. Oh! the quarterings and bearings
" which I was compelled to affect hearing;
" the genealogies I was diſtracted with; and
" the marriages and intermarriages to which
" I appeared to liſten, while in fact I knew
" nothing of what he ſaid, and only endured
" this ſort of martyrdom in the hope of ſeeing
" Lady Caſtlenorth, who on my firſt viſits did
" not deign to appear.

" All theſe latter harangues were, I found,
" intended to impreſs on my mind the pride and
" prudence which would attend a union with
" my couſin, his daughter, and the advantage
" it would give me above any other alliance I
" could form. My patient acquieſcence was
" imputed to returning inclination for this boaſt-
" ed connection; and when I was thought to be
" ſufficiently impreſſed with the ideas thus

" meant

" meant to be conveyed to me, and to be " weaned from the weakneſs I had betrayed, " I was admitted, without any ſolicitation how- " ever on my part, to the honour of ſeeing " Lady Caſtlenorth and her daughter.

" The elder lady was the only one of them " with whom I wiſhed to have any converſa- " tion, and her love of hearing herſelf talk " obtained me this favour, in ſpite of all the " diſpleaſure ſhe had conceived againſt me: but " it was very difficult to bring her to converſe " on that ſubject which alone intereſted me: " ſhe would talk politics, or give me a diſſerta- " tion on the nature of the ſoul, or on the " eruptions of Veſuvius, deſcant on the age of " the world, or on her *own* age, (if her audit- " ors would allow her to be not quite five and " forty:) but of Celeſtina ſhe would *not* talk; " and if ever I, in ſpite of her evaſions, in- " troduced the converſation, ſhe affected to " hear me with horror, and to conſider every " mention I made of a perſon whom ſhe called " ſo connected with me, as the moſt indelicate " and improper converſation with which I " could entertain her. She was for the moſt " part ſurrounded, when I was admitted to her, " with abbati, and the oracle of a circle ſhe " had herſelf formed, in which it was generally " impracticable to entertain her with any other " converſation than that ſhe choſe to lead to.

" Her daughter, who had formerly received " me with ſo much haughtineſs, and who had " ſince been offended in the tendereſt point, a " point too in which her extreme vanity had

" rendered

" rendered her particularly ſuſceptible, affected
" no longer the overweening pride which in
" our firſt interviews had been ſo repulſive, but
" a ſoft melancholy, which ſits well enough on
" ſome people, but was in her more likely to
" move mirth than pity: ſhe ſeldom ſpoke to
" me; but when ſhe did, it was with the air
" of one whoſe juſt indignation was conquered
" by ſofter ſentiments. I knew I never could
" deſerve thoſe ſentiments from her, and there-
" fore was very ſorry to ſee them, even though
" certain they were feigned.

" But it was here only I could hope to gain
" any information of the woman, Hannah
" Biſcoe, who pretended to have lived with
" my mother near twenty years ſince. Lady
" Caſtlenorth evaded, with wonderful art, ever
" giving me any trace of this circumſtance,
" and of her daughter I knew it was in vain to
" enquire; but there was a little ſmart Italian
" girl, called Juſtina, who had attended on
" Miſs Fitz-Hayman for ſome time, and who
" had been in England with her, and I took
" occaſion, as often as I could ſee her, to ſay
" ſome obliging thing to her, and ſometimes
" to make her a trifling preſent. Juſtina, in
" conſequence of my taking ſo much notice of
" her, began officiouſly to put herſelf in my
" way; and I believe her vanity prompted her
" for ſome time to ſuppoſe I had very different
" motives for my attention than thoſe with
" which I was really actuated.

" But in a foreign woman of that rank even
" vanity uſually yields to avarice. When I had

" obtained an opportunity of clearly explaining
" myſelf, Juſtina undertook to procure me a di-
" rection to the woman whom I was ſo ſolicitous
" to find. She produced it in about a week, but
" artfully evaded my queſtion as to how ſhe
" came by it. I ſent off my own ſervant inſtantly
" with it, determined to follow him myſelf if
" the information as to her place of abode
" proved to be true. I received an account
" from him that a few days before his ar-
" rival at the houſe in Suffolk, where ſhe was
" ſaid to live, ſhe had removed from thence,
" and the people either did not know or would
" not tell whither ſhe was gone.

" This ſeemed ſo like an artifice of Lady
" Caſtlenorth's to prevent my making the en-
" quiry which ſhe knew I had ſo long and ſo
" earneſtly deſired, that I could now no longer
" doubt but that Juſtina had betrayed me: but
" during this diſquieting ſuſpenſe time wore
" away, and you, Celeſtina—what did you,
" what could you think of me?

" I entertained the ſtrongeſt hopes, that
" ſince Lady Caſtlenorth ſo induſtriouſly kept
" me from the perſon ſhe had herſelf produced,
" as likely to give me authentic and indiſput-
" able teſtimony, that ſhe knew her evidence
" would not bear inveſtigation, and to this
" hope I eagerly adhered. My mind, however
" was too much irritated by the idea of ſuch
" complicated treachery to allow me to keep
" terms with her as I had hitherto done: I
" was wandering about Italy all the time of
" Farnham's abſence: on his rejoining me, I

" went

" went back to the reſidence of Lord Caſtle-
" north, and very peremptorily taxed his wife
" with fraud. I denied that Hannah Biſcoe lived
" with my mother at the period ſhe pretended
" to have done ſo; and that leſt I ſhould diſ-
" cover the deception, that ſhe had been ſent
" away from the place where I had with diffi-
" culty diſcovered her.

" Lady Caſtlenorth affected the calm indif-
" ference of injured innocence, the proud con-
" ſciouſneſs of ill treated integrity; ſhe affected
" to declare that ſhe was deſirous of my ſeeing
" this Hannah Biſcoe, that ſhe knew not of her
" departure from the place whither ſhe went,
" which was the houſe of a brother in law,
" nor was in any way concerned about her,
' but,' added ſhe, riſing and going to a cabinet
" where ſhe kept papers; ' you ſhall preſently
" be convinced that ſhe did live with your mo-
" ther in the year 1770'

" She took out a letter, which I ſaw imme-
" diately to be my mother's hand. It was di-
" rected to Hannah Biſcoe at Mrs. Willough-
" by's, South Audley-ſtreet, where my mo-
" ther's town houſe then was. Theſe were
" the words:

' HANNAH,

' I deſire you will immediately on receipt
' of this go to Kenſington, and deliver the
' encloſed to the perſon for whom it is di-
' rected, and let me know by the return
' of the poſt whether the orders I gave in a for-

' mer

'mer letter were executed, and how every 'thing goes on there.

Alveſtone, 'M. WILLOUGHBY.'
April 26, 1770.

" I returned the letter to Lady Caſtlenorth, " and expreſſed myſelf very warmly; inſiſting " upon it, that from ſuch evidence nothing " could be derived or even gueſſed at: but ſhe " bade me, with a contemptuous ſmile, remem- " ber, that when I queſtioned this woman at " Exeter ſhe had told me, that you were for the " firſt months of your life nurſed at Kenſing- " ton, whither ſhe went almoſt every day " to ſee you, and that at five or ſix months old " you were ſent abroad; and when my mother " went to the South of France, on pretence of " recovering her health, eighteen or twenty " months after the death of my father, you " were conveyed thither, and there put under " the care of a friend, who placed you ſoon " after with the Superior of the convent of " St. Celeſtine, at Hieres, as a relation of her " own.

" The coincidence of this ſtory, with what " I had heard before relative to Madame Pel- " latier, ſtruck me with more force than any " thing I had yet learned. I left the houſe of " Lord Caſtlenorth more miſerable than I had " ever been before, and again ſet out for Pro- " vence, hardly knowing why, and not caring " at all what became of me.

" Ever ſince that period, Celeſtina, I have " been wandering from place to place in ſearch

" of

" of information which I cannot obtain, and,
" which obtained, would certainly render me
" wretched, if indeed any wretchedneſs can
" be greater than that which in my preſent
" ſtate of miſerable uncertainty it is my lot to
" ſuffer.

" Are we then, Celeſtina, are we related by
" blood? and is there an invincible bar between
" us? Was my mother, that admirable, that
" excellent, and almoſt faultleſs woman, capa-
" ble of living in a ſtate of continual diſſimula-
" tion as to you, and of hiding one fault by
" another, which might have been followed
" by conſequences ſo hideous to my imagina-
" tion? Oh! Celeſtina, it ſeems ſacrilege to
" her memory to think it: yet her averſion to
" my expreſſions of tenderneſs towards you,
" her conduct in a hundred inſtances I can re-
" collect, her ſtrong injunctions, the promiſe
" ſhe extorted from me to marry Miſs Fitz-
" Hayman—a promiſe urged with ſuch vehe-
" mence, even in her laſt moments! Could
" the poor conſideration of pecuniary advantage
" influence her then? did it ever influence her?
" And the repetition of your name with her
" laſt breath, mingled with words that might
" be a prayer for you, but which I have ſince
" thought was poſſibly the fatal ſecret which
" ſhe determined to divulge only in death.
" The ſad recollection of that ſcene, her coun-
" tenance, which I continually behold, her
" voice which murmurs ſtill in my ears, all, all
" contribute to empoiſon every moment of my
" life, and to make that tender affection, that

" ardent

" ardent love, which was once the joy of my " exiſtence and the pride of my heart, the " ſevereſt curſe with which heaven can purſue " me.

" Yes, Celeſtina, unleſs I dared indulge that " fondneſs with which my heart overflows, I " would I could forget you for ever, and deter- " mine never to ſee you more, for I deſpair of " ever ſeeing you as I—— Pardon me, I am " loſt in the confuſion of ſenſations I cannot de- " ſcribe; and at this moment I hope ſo mi- " ſerable a being does not exiſt on this earth. " Write to me, Celeſtina: you have more " ſtrength of mind than I have; you are not, " like me, the ſport of agonizing paſſions. " ——Write to me; tell me what you " would have me do farther to unveil this ſad " myſtery, or to throw it from us for ever, if " that may be. I have told Vavaſour what it " appeared impoſſible longer to conceal from " him: he is warmly my friend, and you " may employ him in any way in which you " think he can be uſeful. Celeſtina, I com- " mit you to his protection! till—till when, " heaven only knows; and I dare not truſt my " pen with another word; only I entreat you " to write to me; and may every happineſs " that virtue and innocence, and excellence " like your's deſerves, ever be the portion of " my Celeſtina, whatever becomes of the un- " happy

" G. WILLOUGHBY."

Thus

Thus ended this long letter, and thus was explained the ſtrange circumſtances that had coſt Celeſtina ſo many tears. But ſhe wept not now: ſhe read the letter over twice: her firſt tremulous emotion ſubſided; but her ſtunned ſenſes had not recovered their tone. It was late; it was cold; her candle had burnt nearly out. She put the letter on her pillow; and unable to undreſs herſelf, threw herſelf on the bed in her cloaths, and lay pondering on what ſhe had read, on Willoughby's ſituation and her own, till the tedious night was at an end.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XII.

VAVASOUR, who had paſſed great part of *his* night over a bottle, was not, however, at all more diſpoſed to ſleep towards morning than if he had been in bed, but at half after ſeven o'clock he ſent the houſemaid to know if Miſs De Mornay was up, and, if ſhe was, directed the ſervant to give his compliments to her, and let her know that he ſhould take it as a favour if ſhe would allow him to ſpeak to her for a few moments before her other friends were aſſembled.

Celeſtina had but juſt fallen into an unquiet ſlumber, when ſhe was awakened by the maid who tapped at the door, from an uneaſy dream indeed, but from a change of uneaſineſs. With her returning memory, all the purport of Willoughby's letter returned; and Vavaſour's meſſage added moſt painfully, the recollection that ſhe muſt diſcuſs it all with him.

She ordered him to be told, that ſhe was not very well, and could not immediately attend him: then ſhaking off the heavy laſſitude which uneaſineſs and want of reſt had occaſioned, ſhe called to her aid all that ſtrength of mind and rectitude of heart with which ſhe was eminently endowed

endowed by nature; and having again read over Willoughby's letter, began to conſider what ſhe ought to do.

With a doubt of ſuch a nature on his mind, ſhe reſolved, whatever it coſt her, never to meet him but as his ſiſter; unleſs, which was very improbable, the ſtrong and bewildering circumſtances which had given riſe to ſuch an idea could all be removed. With ſo much purity did ſhe love him, that ſhe felt, that were he happy with another, and his eſteem and tenderneſs for her undiminiſhed, ſhe could be content through life to find her felicity in witneſſing his. She reſolved, therefore, after much debate with herſelf and ſome pangs of unavoidable regret, that ſince this dark and unpaſſable barrier was raiſed, either by nature or by artifice, between her and the only man ſhe had ever thought of with fond partiality, ſhe would never marry, but would leave him at full liberty to compleat that union with Miſs Fitz-Hayman, which might at once fulfil his engagement to his mother, wean him from that lingering fondneſs for her which it was folly if not guilt to indulge, and retrieve his pecuniary concerns from thoſe embarraſſments which were now haſtening to overwhelm him.

Having formed this heroic and proper determination, ſhe endeavoured to compoſe her countenance, to quiet the agitation of her mind, and to meet Vavaſour with that degree of calm ſpirit which ſhe imagined, from paſt experience of his behaviour, ſuch a meeting would require.

This

This, however, was eaſier to imagine than to execute. She wiſhed indeed to meet him without witneſſes, becauſe ſhe knew he poſſeſſed too little of that delicacy which would teach him to repreſs any part of his knowledge before ſtrangers, as Mrs. Elphinſtone and Montague Thorold were to him: but when ſhe opened the door of the room where ſhe knew he waited for her, the blood forſook her cheeks, her trembling hands refuſed the little exertion neceſſary to turn the lock, her feet refuſed to carry her forward, and ſhe would have returned without ſpeaking to him for that time, if he, who was eagerly waiting her approach, had not heard her light foot-ſteps in the paſſage, and opened the door while ſhe yet ſtood heſitating at it.

He was ſtruck by the ſight of her ſwollen and heavy eyes, the languor of her air, and the paleneſs of her countenance; and his uſual addreſs which had more of warmth and vivacity than elegance, was ſoftened by the real concern of which he was at that moment ſenſible. He took her hand, which trembled within his as he led her to a ſeat—"I am ſorry," ſaid he, "to ſee that you are not well."

Celeſtina tried to ſpeak, but could not. Vavaſour had but an indifferent notion of adminiſtering conſolation, nor could he contrive to condole with her for what he ſecretly rejoiced at himſelf; ſo that between his diſſembled concern and his undiſſembled ſatisfaction, he ſat a moment or two ſilent; and then remarked, that the letter he had brought gave a very good account of George's health.

Celeſtina,

Celeſtina, without having any very preciſe idea of what ſhe ſaid, anſwered faintly, yes; and by this time Vavaſour added, that it contained alſo, he ſuppoſed, like what he had at the ſame time received, the hiſtory of a deviliſh awkward, myſterious buſineſs.

Celeſtina, who found herſelf unequal to the converſation, thought it better to put an end to it at once and for ever. She therefore, by an effort of reſolution, commanded voice enough to ſay—"Mr. Vavaſour, you underſtand undoubtedly that every idea of the alliance between your friend and me, is at an end for ever. As for the reaſons that exiſt againſt it, a thouſand motives make me wiſh they may remain ſecret; from this moment, therefore, you will very much oblige me, by forbearing to ſpeak of Mr. Willoughby otherwiſe than as my beſt friend, and by concealing from the world a ſecret, in which it can have no intereſt, but which will give pain to many to have divulged."

"Divulged!" cried he, laughing: "what "then do you ſuppoſe it is any ſecret."

"To be ſure I do," ſhe replied.

"Oh! yes," anſwered he, "that is mighty likely, when Lady Caſtlenorth has taken ſuch pains to talk of it every where already."

"Lady Caſtlenorth!" cried Celeſtina; a faint bluſh riſing in her pale cheek.

"Aye, to be ſure," ſaid Vavaſour careleſsly, "that ſhe did months ago. Why don't you know, that beſides the intereſt ſhe had in dividing you and Willoughby, becauſe her daughter is in love with him it ſeems, ſhe always hated

hated his mother; and that death itſelf is no barrier againſt malice like her's."

"Do you think it probable or poſſible that this ſtory may be entirely the effect of that malice."

"Why faith no. I own I do not. You know—at leaſt people tell me ſo who do know, that it was whiſpered about a great many years ago, and even ſaid, that Everard was privately married to Mrs Willoughby. But what ſignifies talking about it," added he, ſeeing her again change colour—"You have juſt been deſiring me to ſay nothing about it. George ſeems to me to have made up his mind about it: he will marry his couſin, and retrieve his eſtates, as was his firſt plan; and my fair Celeſtina" (and he took her hand) "will look out for ſomebody elſe to transfer thoſe affections to, that he reſigns."

"No, Sir," ſaid Celeſtina, withdrawing her hand haſtily from him, "they are not, I aſſure you, ſo eaſily transferred."

"I am glad to hear it," replied Vavaſour, without being at all diſconcerted by her manner; "for then I hope this [illegible] young fellow, whom I find here t[illegible] with you, will not have the preſ[illegible] to ſuppoſe *he* has any chance of obtaining them? Pray tell me—how comes he here with you? is he any relation of the people you are with?"

This was a queſtion it was impoſſible for Celeſtina to anſwer ingenuouſly. The piercing and enquiring eyes of Vavaſour, inflamed and fierce from the late hours and free uſe of wine

the

the preceding night, were fixed on her face. She changed countenance; felt that ſhe did, and again her complexion altered. The various emotions with which ſhe was agitated, conſciouſneſs that ſhe muſt no longer think of Willoughby as a lover, yet could never admit another to that diſtinction, conſciouſneſs too that Montague Thorold muſt appear in the eyes of the world to have ſucceeded to that place, and anger that Vavaſour ſhould thus preſume on the confidence of Willoughby to queſtion her with a freedom he had otherwiſe no pretenſions to, all combined to affect, to diſtreſs, and to deprive her for a few moments of that preſence of mind, which, from the ſtrength and clearneſs of her underſtanding, was uſually at her command.

Vavaſour, who, from the time he found Willoughby muſt in all probability reſign her, made no doubt of ſucceeding to her affections; who had no idea of the ſenſations which preſſed on her heart, from his total inability to feel them himſelf; became irritated and impatient at the ſilence his own impetuoſity had occaſioned. He ſat eagerly reading on her countenance the emotions of her heart, and interpreting them his own way: again he repeated his queſtion—"How came young Thorold with you? Is he related to theſe Elphinſtones'?"

"You muſt enquire of him," Celeſtina was on the point of ſaying; but the fear leſt a quarrel between them ſhould be the conſequence of her ſo anſwering, checked her. She tried, therefore, to evade the queſtion. "Of what

concern

concern is it," ſaid ſhe, " *how* he came hither. We were talking of Mr. Willoughby. Pray tell me—is he aware that our ſuppoſed relationſhip is talked of? Does he know the pains Lady Caſtlenorth has been at to circulate the ſtory?"

" 'Tis impoſſible for me to know that," ſaid Vavaſour, (as it really was;) " it is much more in your way to tell me, how this college boy came hither with you.

" I know no right you have to enquire about it," anſwered Celeſtina faintly, " becauſe I cannot ſee that it is a concern in which you are at all intereſted."

" You will give me leave then to make my own concluſions; or rather," added he, in a louder voice, on ſeeing Montague Thorold enter the room, " rather to interrogate the gentleman himſelf."

This was exactly what Celeſtina had been moſt ſolicitous to avoid; the impetuoſity of Vavaſour, the ſurprize and anger ſhe ſaw flaſhing from the eyes of Thorold, her ſleepleſs night and long agitated ſpirits, the fear of ſhe knew not what conſequences from theſe two inflammable ſpirits, and her inability to check or repreſs thoſe over whom ſhe had no pretence to aſſume any authority, were together a combination of cruel circumſtances which might have overcome a ſtronger mind than her's Mrs Elphinſtone was dejected from ſituation, and languid from recent ſorrow of her own: to her, therefore, Celeſtina would in any caſe reluctantly have applied; and now ſhe could not leave

leave the room to ſeek her without leaving together two men who ſeemed ſo highly irritated againſt each other that the firſt moment of her abſence would probably bring them to extremities.

To ſpeak to Vavaſour, was to addreſs the winds or the ſea: ſhe ſaw that he was hardly ſober, that he was incapable of feeling for her diſtreſs, or of liſtening to any thing but his paſſionate impetuoſity: it was on Thorold alone ſhe had any hopes of prevailing; but in the moment of her deliberation this hope ſeemed eſcaping her.

Before ſhe could determine on what to do, Vavaſour had, in a manner at once contemptuous and haſty, addreſſed himſelf to Montague Thorold, and enquired how it happened that he was at York attending on Mrs. Elphinſtone and Miſs De Mornay?

"How it happens, Sir?" ſaid Thorold. "Is there any thing ſo very extraordinary in it? May I not be at York or at Canterbury?"

"Yes," replied Vavaſour, "when you are Archbiſhop of either; and then you will be, for aught I know, in your right place; but at preſent I think you in the wong one."

"What *you* think, Sir," replied Thorold, "is the laſt thing that ever can be of any conſequence to me; and if my actions are, as I apprehend, of as little to you, I imagine we can find ſome pleaſanter topic than either the one or the other, on which to entertain this lady."

He then approached Celeſtina, who was, he ſaw, ready to ſink from her chair; and ſoftening his voice, ſaid—"You are ill I am afraid"

"No," replied ſhe; but I am alarmed and uneaſy;

uneaſy; and I beg of you," continued ſhe, lowering her voice, "I beg of you to keep your temper, let Mr. Vavaſour ſay what he will."

"I cannot promiſe that," ſaid he in the ſame tone; but I can promiſe never voluntarily to do or ſay any thing that ſhall give you a moment's pain. Do not be ſo diſtreſſed, I beſeech you; let me find Mrs. Elphinſtone. You tremble, you ſeem ready to faint."

"I am indeed," replied ſhe, "affected from numberleſs cauſes. If you will be ſo good as to call Mrs. Elphinſtone, I will be much obliged to you."

Thorold went immediately to obey her; and Vavaſour approaching her, cried—"I ſee how it is; that young fellow is to conſole you for the loſs of Willoughby. Your partiality to him I always ſuſpected, and am now too well convinced of it."

"Well, Sir," cried Celeſtina, aſſuming in ſome degree her uſual ſpirit; "and admitting it to be ſo, I do not really underſtand by what pretence you call me to an account for it."

"By my own long and ardent affection for you," cried he; "of which, however you may now chuſe to affect ignorance, you cannot have been ignorant. I ſacrificed it to Willoughby's prior claim, and to your viſible attachment to him; but I am not humble enough to withdraw my pretenſions in favour of ſuch a raw boy as Montague Thorold."

"I am obliged to you, Sir," anſwered Celeſtina, "for the predilection you avow in my favour: though it cannot *command* my affection,

it

it demands my ſincerity; and I therefore aſſure you, that though I am now perhaps at liberty, I have no intention of engaging myſelf again. I ſhall hope to be allowed to conſider both you and Mr. Thorold as my friends, while I abſolutely decline any preference to either.'

The pride of Vavaſour was hurt extremely by this ſpeech. Though he was not perſonally vain, yet he had from his infancy been ſo accuſtomed to have his own way, that oppoſition from any quarter was new and inſupportable to him. Mrs. Elphinſtone and Thorold at this moment entering the room, he for once checked himſelf; and breakfaſt being ready, he was invited to partake of it, which however he declined, but told Celeſtina, on retiring, that he muſt deſire to ſee her again alone in an hour.

Celeſtina now attempted to repreſs the various emotions with which ſhe was agitated, and to quiet the throbbings of her heart. She ſat down to the table, and tried to eat, but could not; while Montague Thorold, watching with eager fondneſs every turn of her countenance, officiouſly tried to engage her to partake of the breakfaſt that was before her.

As ſoon as ſhe could, however, ſhe withdrew; and after a moment's pauſe alone, her ſcattered and oppreſſed ſenſes were collected enough to bring before her all that had happened, and tears, which ſhe had not hitherto been able to ſhed, came to her relief.

Her reaſon too, came to her aſſiſtance, and ſtrengthened the reſolution ſhe had formed after her firſt peruſal of Willoughby's letter. But

though ſhe was able to decide on what ſhe ought to do herſelf, ſhe ſaw many painful circumſtances likely to be created by the violence of Vavaſour, and the impoſſibility of prevailing either on him or on Montague Thorold to leave her and Mrs. Elphinſtone to purſue their journey with the others; or, what ſhe would ſtill have preferred, of continuing it without the attendance of either.

When the mind is oppreſſed with any heavy affliction, the leſs ſerious evils which at other times it can repel or ſubmit to, are felt with painful impatience. Mrs. Elphinſtone, drooping and depreſſed from her paſt ſufferings and future apprehenſions, could no longer interpoſe to check the impetuoſity of two young men, each of whom thought himſelf at liberty to attend on Celeſtina; while Celeſtina herſelf who never meant to encourage either, and whoſe heart was ſo recently wounded by the dread of having loſt that protection on which ſhe was wont with fondneſs to rely, was yet more unequal to the exertion which was neceſſary to part theſe men, who were determined to look upon each other as rivals, or to keep them within the bounds of civility if they perſiſted in remaining together.

Anxious to proceed towards the houſe of Cathcart, and to put her children under the care of her brother, while ſhe herſelf tried to enter on ſome mode of life by which to procure them a ſubſiſtence, Mrs. Elphinſtone became impatient of any farther delay; while Celeſtina, though equally anxious to get forward, trembled at the thought of a journey, which ſhe foreſaw would

would produce a quarrrel, and perhaps a duel, before they had proceeded three ſtages.

Sometimes ſhe thought of leaving the whole party abruptly, and going on as ſpeedily as poſſible alone: but beſides her unwillingneſs to leave Mrs. Elphinſtone, ſhe foreſaw that if ſhe did, this Vavaſour would follow and overtake her; and Thorold would hardly content himſelf with attending her friend, while certain that Vavaſour was with her. After much conſideration, therefore, nothing ſeemed to remain, but to endeavour to prevail on Thorold to go forward without them; than which, nothing ſeemed much more unlikely to ſucceed, unleſs it was the ſame attempt on Vavaſour. She felt, too, a reluctance in aſking a favour of Thorold, which he might interpret as encouragement ſhe never meant to give him; and was afraid that the aſſurances ſhe muſt make him in regard to her total indifference towards Vavaſour, might afford him reaſon to hope, that towards him ſhe would be leſs inexorable.

It was neceſſary, however, immediately to make the eſſay; and therefore ſending for Mr. Thorold, ſhe with trembling heſitation told him, that the letters brought by Mr. Vavaſour had been deciſive in regard to ending the intended alliance between her and Mr. Willoughby. But ſhe had hardly uttered the word Willoughby, before the countenance of Montague Thorold was animated with all the warm hopes to which this intelligence gave birth. She ſaw it with concern; and with as much reſolution as ſhe could, beſought him to attend to her, while

with a faultering voice, and her tears with difficulty repreſſed, ſhe went on—"That I ſhall now never be the wife of Willoughby is certain: but do not miſunderſtand me; I have determined never to be the wife of any other perſon. I ſhall go, for the reſt of the winter, to Lady Horatia Howard, and afterwards retire to ſome village as remote as poſſible from that part of England where I once expected to paſs my life. This reſolution is unalterable. But though I never can return as you wiſh the favourable ſentiments with which you have honoured me, my friendſhip, my gratitude, my eſteem, it is in your power to ſecure and——"

"Friendſhip! gratitude! eſteem!" cried Montague Thorold. "Can I be content with ſuch cold words: I, who can never for an inſtant diſengage my thoughts from you; I, who worſhip your very ſhadow, and who cannot bear the thoughts of quitting you even for a moment. Oh! Celeſtina! if ever the moſt pure and violent love deſerved a return ——"

"Forgive me," cried Celeſtina, "if in my turn I interrupt you. Do you not miſtake your ſentiments, or by an abuſe of terms, call a tranſient liking by that name which ought to belong only to that refined affection of the heart which leads us to prefer the happineſs of another to our own, and to ſacrifice every inferior conſideration to the ſublime pleaſure of promoting that happineſs."

"Heaven and earth!" cried Thorold impetuouſly, "and do I not feel that ſentiment in all its purity for you? Would I not lay down my

my life to procure you any real—almoſt any imaginary good."

"Prove it," interrupted Celeſtina, "prove it by obliging me in the requeſt I am going to make: a requeſt in which I muſt not be refuſed, and which, before I make it, you muſt abſolutely promiſe to grant."

"I promiſe," returned Thorold, who had at that moment no idea whither her requeſt tended, "I promiſe to obey you, even though you deſired my death. If the ſacrifice I make has any merit in your eyes, how cheaply would your approbation be purchaſed even by the loſs of exiſtence."

"All that is very abſurd and very wild," replied Celeſtina. "What I aſk you can eaſily do, and ought to do without reluctance."

"Name it," cried he, "and ſee how well I can obey you."

Celeſtina then told him, that Vavaſour, fancying his friendſhip with Mr. Willoughby gave him a right to attend her, meant, ſhe feared, to go on with her and Mrs. Elphinſtone to London; "And from the dialogues which have twice paſſed between you and him," added ſhe, "there is reaſon to apprehend that your continuing together may be attended with very unpleaſant conſequences: neither Mrs. Elphinſtone or I have courage to encounter the ſort of contention which may ariſe between you: and to avoid the hazard of it, allow us to thank you for all the trouble you have taken for us, and now to bid you adieu till we meet again in Devonſhire."

Montague

The day, however, was of neceſſity to be ended where they were; and it was very certain that Vavaſour would paſs it with them. He had ordered for them every thing they were likely to have occaſion for, in a ſtile infinitely ſuperior to what they would themſelves have thought of; and when they met at dinner, he received them as his gueſts, and when his natural vivacity was heightened by that ſort of triumph that he felt on finding that Thorold was gone, his exulting ſpirits were ſuch as to be cruelly oppreſſive both to Mrs. Elphinſtone and Celeſtina.

Incapable of entering into *their* feelings, he had no idea of repreſſing his own. He fancied there no longer exiſted any obſtacle to his project in regard to Celeſtina; and as that project had long been the firſt of his heart, and had become doubly important from the oppoſition it had met with, he concealed no part of the pleaſure he felt at what he fancied the abſolute certainty of its immediate accompliſhment.

This was conduct that was inſupportably diſtreſſing to Celeſtina. He ſpoke without ſcruple of the reſignation Willoughby had made of her hand, and ſeemed to have as little delicacy as to the occaſion of it. Of an attachment to him, abſtracted from every idea of becoming his wife, Vavaſour had no idea; and Celeſtina had no courage to urge it, ſo entirely did his want of feeling, and the proud certainty he ſhewed of his own ſucceſs, overwhelm her. All ſhe could do was, to entreat Mrs. Elphinſtone not to leave her with him, and to aſſiſt her

her as much as poſſible in attempting at leaſt to check that aſſuming manner, for which neither her former friendſhip for Vavaſour, no the regard Willoughby had for him, could, in her opinion, offer any apology.

Fortunately, however, for both her and her friend, two young men of fortune, much acquainted with Vavaſour, arrived at the inn early in the evening, and ſeeing his ſervants, enquired for him, and were ſhewn into the room almoſt as ſoon as dinner was over. Celeſtina and her friend took the earlieſt opportunity to withdraw; and Vavaſour's attention to his gueſts over their wine, delivered them for the reſt of the evening from his company.

He had taken care, however, to inform himſelf of all that related to their journey the next day. But eager as he was to have Celeſtina in the chaiſe with him, he was compelled to deſiſt from the requeſt he at firſt ventured to make, on her repreſenting the impoſſibility of her leaving Mrs. Elphinſtone; to whom, though Vavaſour heartily wiſhed her once more in the Hebrides, he had at length the complaiſance to offer his place in his own chaiſe, as being more commodious than the hired ones to be found on the road; and agreed, on her acquieſcence in that arrangement, to follow himſelf in a hack chaiſe with his ſervant.

The gentlemen who had paſſed the evening with him at the inn, were not leſs fond of the pleaſures of the table than he was himſelf; and their orgies had been proſonged till it was no longer worth while for him to go to bed. With

a very little alteration of his dreſs therefore, and with a great deal of wine ſtill in his head, he was ready in the morning to ſet out: but ſuch was his appearance, and ſuch his manners in conſequence of his debauch the preceding evening, that Celeſtina was more than ever ſolicitous to avoid him; and had it been poſſible for her to have thought of him before with the ſlighteſt degree of partiality, his looks and his converſation of this morning would have filled her with terror and diſguſt.

As ſhe travelled on, however, by the ſide of her dejected friend, who had no ſpirits for converſation, ſhe could not, amid all the reflection on her own circumſtances, which filled her mind, avoid conſidering, with melancholy regret, the ſituation of this young man, who, with ſome talents and many virtues, was thus yielding to the wild current of paſſion and vice, and deſtroying his conſtitution and his fortune before he knew the value of either. She then with mournful recollection contraſted his character with that of Willoughby, who had once all his vivacity, tempered with ſo much ſweetneſs, ſo much attention to the feelings of others; who had all his generoſity of ſpirit and openneſs of heart, without any of his careleſs diſſipation; and whoſe brighter talents were not obſcured by vice, nor degraded by folly; and as all his virtues, all his amiable qualities were enumerated, her heart felt all the acuteneſs of ſorrow, in remembering too that under their influence ſhe had loſt the hope of paſſing her life; yet the cruel pain of the reflection that theſe hopes were

were now at an end, was immediately mitigated, when ſhe conſidered, that this ſhe might perhaps ſtill do, as his ſiſter and his friend; but her reaſon, however it began to recover its tone, could never ſay any thing to her that for a moment taught her to reflect with pleaſure, or even with tranquillity, on the thoughts of his being united to Miſs Fitz-Hayman.

On reperuſing Willoughby's letter, which ſhe had now acquired courage to ſtudy more minutely, ſhe ſaw with new uneaſineſs, what in the firſt tumult of her ſpirits had eſcaped her, or at leaſt made but a ſlight impreſſion—that he recommended her particularly to the care and protection of Vavaſour; and that, as he had probably intimated the ſame truſt to Vavaſour himſelf, ſhe ſhould find it very difficult to diſengage herſelf from his attendance.

The longer ſhe dwelt on Willoughby's expreſſions, the more ſhe apprehended he was but too well convinced that the whole ſtory of their relationſhip did not originate with Lady Caſtlenorth. She foreſaw, that while even the ſhadow of a doubt remained, their union never ought to be thought of: but having nobody with whom ſhe could properly diſcuſs the various and contradictory ideas on this bewildering ſubject that paſſed through her mind, ſhe looked forward with earneſt impatience to the hour when ſhe ſhould receive the maternal counſel and ſoothing conſolation which Lady Horatio Howard alone was likely to afford her.

The journey, however, was to be performed; and though ſhe carefully avoided, during the

two

two days that it laſted, being alone with Vavaſour, yet ſhe ſuffered extreme pain from the encreaſing conviction that he preſumed on Willoughby's total reſignation of her, and openly declared that he thought himſelf a candidate for her favour, whoſe fortune and pretenſions of every kind rendered him ſecure of ſucceſs.

At length the party reached London, and Cathcart received his ſiſter and her friend at the lodgings he had prepared for them on being informed of the time of their arrival.

The meeting between him and Mrs. Elphinſtone was too affecting to the already depreſſed ſpirits of Celeſtina. She retired early to her own room, having with difficulty prevailed on Vavaſour to quit her, and there endeavoured to acquire ſteadineſs to talk over with Cathcart, the next morning, the purport of Willoughby's letter; and then to take leave of him and her poor dejected friend, as Lady Horatia Howard had received with avidity the information of her intended viſit to her, and was to ſend her coach for her at one o'clock on the following day.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIII.

THE morning at length arrived, and the friends who had ſo long found all the conſolation their circumſtances admitted of in being together, were now to part; uncertain when, or if ever, they were to meet again. Mrs. Elphinſtone, ſinking as ſhe was under oppreſſion of many preſent ſorrows and future apprehenſions, yet found them all deepened by the loſs of Celeſtina, who had ſo generouſly aſſiſted her in ſupporting them: and Celeſtina felt, that when to ſoothe the ſpirits and ſtrengthen the reſolution of her friend was no longer her immediate taſk, ſhe ſhould dwell with more painful and more ſteady ſolicitude on her own ſingular and unfortunate ſituation.

Cathcart, warmly attached as he was to both, from gratitude and from affection, had no power to ſpeak comfort to either. Early in the morning he had met Celeſtina, and gone through Willoughby's letter: but though his mind ſometimes ſtrongly reſiſted the idea of that relationſhip of which it ſpoke, he had nothing to offer againſt it; and could only ſigh over the incurable unhappineſs with which he ſaw the future

future days of friends he ſo much loved would be clouded.

Silently they all aſſembled round the breakfaſt table; but nobody could eat. Cathcart tried to talk of Jeſſy, of his houſe, of his farm, of his fortunate proſpects, and of his ſiſter's two little girls, whom he had taken home; but there was not one topic on which he could ſpeak that did not remind him of the obligations he owed to Celeſtina and Willoughby, nor one idea which aroſe unembittered with the reflection, that they, to whom he was indebted for all *his* happineſs, were themſelves miſerable.

About twelve o'clock Vavaſour came into the room in his uſual way; enquired eagerly of Celeſtina when ſhe went to Lady Horatia Howard's, and when he could ſee her there; and without waiting for an anſwer to his enquiry, told her that he had that morning met Sir Philip Molyneux, and that Lady Molyneux had been in town about a week. Every body who was related to Willoughby was intereſting to Celeſtina; and from Lady Molyneux ſhe had always ſuppoſed more might be collected than from any other perſon: but now her mind was too much oppreſſed and too much confuſed to allow her to diſtinguiſh her ſenſations, or to arrange any ſettled plan for her future conduct towards Lady Molyneux. She received Vavaſour's information, therefore, with coldneſs; and indeed her manners towards him were very conſtrained and diſtant, which he either did not or would not notice; rattling on in his uſual wild

wild way, though he ſaw the dejection and concern of the party; a circumſtance that more than ever diſguſted Celeſtina, who began ſome time before to doubt whether the credit which Vavaſour had for good nature was not given him on very ſlender foundations: for to be ſo entirely occupied by his own pleaſures and purſuits as to be incapable of the leaſt ſympathy towards others, to be unable or unwilling to check for one moment his vivacity in compliment to their deſpondence, ſeemed to Celeſtina ſuch a want of ſenſibility, as gave her a very indifferent opinion of his heart.

Mrs. Elphinſtone quitted the room to make the laſt preparations for her departure: but Cathcart, who had ſettled every thing before, remained with Celeſtina and Vavaſour. He would have given the world to have paſſed theſe moments in converſation with her; but the preſence of a third perſon, and eſpecially of Vavaſour, put an end to all hope he had of an opportunity of explaining to her, with that tenderneſs and caution which the ſubject required, ſome circumſtances relative to Willoughby's fortune, which had lately come to his knowledge. New embarraſſments ſeemed threatening him; and a law ſuit, involving part of the property which belonged to Alveſtone eſtate, ſeemed likely to encreaſe theſe embarraſſments; while the mortgagees were gradually undermining the eſtate itſelf; and the abſence of the maſter encreaſed the impatience and miſtruſt of thoſe who had claims upon it.

All

All this, Cathcart thought Celeſtina ought to know; yet in their firſt interview that morning he had not courage to tell her of it, and now Vavaſour left him no chance of doing it; for while he yet deliberated, the coach ſent by Lady Horatia Howard ſtopped at the door, and the moment was come, in which he was to take his leave of her.

He took her hand and kiſſed it with an air of grateful reſpect; but he could only ſay—"I ſhall write to you in a few days, and, I hope, give you a good account of my ſiſter and of Jeſſy."

"I hope you will," returned Celeſtina faintly.

"And," added he, "you will of courſe like to hear of all that paſſes material in our neighbourhood."

"Certainly I ſhall," replied ſhe. "Adieu, dear Sir. I cannot *ſay* much, but you know what I feel for you all."

Vavaſour had taken her hand to lead her down ſtairs; but ſhe diſengaged it from him, and ſaid to Cathcart, as ſhe gave it to him—"Let us go to your ſiſter." He led her to the door of the room; where at that moment Mrs. Elphinſtone entered, pale and breathleſs: her eyes were heavy, and fixed on Celeſtina, but ſhe did not weep. Celeſtina's tears, however, were more ready, and, as ſhe embraced her friend, they choaked the trembling adieu ſhe would have uttered, and fell in ſhowers on her boſom. The emotion was too painful; and Cathcart, deſiring to end it for both their ſakes,

diſengaged

diſengaged his ſiſter gently from the arms of the trembling Celeſtina; while Vavaſour, again ſeizing her hand, hurried her down ſtairs, and as he put her into the coach, told her he ſhould call upon her the next day. She would have beſought him not to do it, as a liberty he ought not to take in the houſe whither ſhe was going; but before ſhe could ſufficiently recover herſelf to find words, the coach was driven away, and in a few moments ſhe found herſelf at the door of Lady Horatia Howard, in Park-ſtreet, Groſvenor-ſquare, and it became neceſſary for her to collect her ſpirits, to acquit herſelf as ſo much kind attention deſerved.

Lady Horatia received her with unfeigned pleaſure, and with a degree of maternal kindneſs that ſet her almoſt immediately at eaſe with herſelf. She was put into poſſeſſion of her apartment, and bade to remember that it was her's as long as ſhe would occupy it, and that her time was always to be her own. "I am going out," ſaid Lady Horatia, "to dinner to-day. I have a great notion you had rather dine at home?" Celeſtina owned ſhe had. "Be it ſo then," replied ſhe: "and whenever you prefer being at home to going with me, I ſhall be pleaſed at your uſing that freedom, without which ſuch a ſituation as I am able to offer you would be not only of no value but a ſpecies of ſlavery:" While ſhe ſaid this in the kindeſt manner, Celeſtina obſerved that ſhe looked very earneſtly at her eyes, which were red with weeping; and examined, with a kind of mournful enquiry, her features, which bore traces of the concern

ſhe

ſhe had felt in parting from her friends; and having thus examined her countenance ſome time, her own, which was remarkably expreſſive, aſſumed a look of ſurpriſe tempered with concern; and then, as if ſhe checked herſelf, ſhe rang for her woman to receive orders about Celeſtina's dinner, and while they remained together, ſhe gave the converſation a more general turn.

When Celeſtina was alone, ſhe ran over in her thoughts the tranſactions of the laſt month, and wondered what Fate would do with her next. But not of herſelf alone ſhe thought: Willoughby, unhappy and unſettled; his mind thrown from its balance by diſappointment; his talents loſt in the bewildering uneaſineſs of uncertainty, and his temper injured by the corroſive anxieties of pecuniary inconvenience; he, who had ſuch a mind, ſuch a heart, ſuch talents, ſuch a temper; who deſerved every happineſs, and yet had hitherto known none; Willoughby, wandering about the world to obtain confirmation of a fact, which, when known, would only complete his miſery; was an object from which the thoughts of Celeſtina could never a moment eſcape: and a thouſand times ſhe wiſhed ſhe had never been born, ſince to her, to whomſoever ſhe owed her birth, Willoughby certainly owed his unhappineſs.

It was time to conſider of obeying the injunction he gave her, towards the cloſe of his letter, to write to him; but on this ſubject ſhe determined to conſult Lady Horatia Howard, as well as to aſk her advice in what way ſhe ſhould

ſhould act in regard to Vavaſour, whoſe importunities ſhe dreaded, yet from whoſe viſits ſhe knew not how to diſengage herſelf.

Under ſuch protection, however, ſhe knew that much of the inconvenience ſhe muſt in other circumſtances feel from Vavaſour's behaviour would be obviated; and that the ſenſe as well as the ſituation of Lady Horatia would prevent that improper familiarity which, when ſhe was only with Cathcart or Mrs. Elphinſtone, whom he looked upon as inferior and as dependent, it was too much his nature to aſſume.

With more complacency, ſhe thought of Montague Thorold, and always of his father with a degree of affectionate reverence. As to the young man, though her heart never admitted, in regard to him, the ſlighteſt tendency towards that ſort of partiality which could ever grow into love, yet ſhe had received ſo many marks of real and ardent attachment from him, ſhe thought ſo well of his talents, and ſo much better of his heart, that ſhe could never diveſt herſelf of ſolicitude for his welfare. Perhaps —for in what heart, however pure, does not ſome ſuch weakneſs lurk—perhaps, the ſtories ſhe had heard of his former univerſal propenſity to form attachments, and which were intended to prejudice her againſt him, had an influence on her mind of which ſhe was herſelf unconſcious, and that her ſelf-love, though no human being ever appeared to have leſs, was gratified by having thus fixed a man ſo volatile and unſteady, though ſhe never could, nor ever had given him reaſon to ſuppoſe ſhe could, return the paſſion ſhe had thus inſpired.

While

While there remained any hope of ever ſeeing Willoughby ſuch as he had once been, ſhe had felt an utter repugnance to ſuffer the aſſiduities of Montague Thorold; but Willoughby's apparent neglect of her for ſome time before ſhe left the Iſle of Skie, and the little probability there now was that they could ever meet in peace, ſince the receipt of his letter, had gradually and almoſt inſenſibly accuſtomed her to the attentions of Montague Thorold: and though ſhe felt for him nothing like love, ſhe could not help being ſenſible of a great difference in her ſentiments towards him and towards Vavaſour. One ſeemed to live only to obey and oblige her; the other, preſuming on the advantage of fortune, or on thoſe which Willoughby's friendſhip gave him, appeared rather to demand than to ſolicit her regard—rather to reſent her neglect of his ſuit, than court as a favour her acceptance of it: and if Celeſtina had any fault, it was a ſort of latent pride, the child of conſcious worth and elevated underſtanding; which though ſhe was certainly obſcurely, and poſſibly diſhonourably born, ſhe never could ſubdue, and, perhaps, never ſeriouſly tried to ſubdue it. She felt, that in point of intellect ſhe was ſuperior to almoſt every body ſhe converſed with; ſhe could not look in the glaſs without ſeeing the reflection of a form, worthy of ſo fair an inhabitant as an enlightened human ſoul; and could ſhe have been blind to theſe advantages, the preference Willoughby had given her ſo early in life would have taught her all their value.

It

It is not the conſciouſneſs of worth that is offenſive and diſguſting, but the tribute of reſpect that is demanded of others who have perhaps no ſuch conviction, and of whom it is therefore unreaſonable and arrogant to expect that they will acknowledge what they cannot perceive. Nobody was ever yet eminently handſome in perſon, or eminently brilliant in intellect, who did not feel from ſelf-evidence that they poſſeſſed thoſe advantages; though many, from the infirmity and weakneſs of their tempers, fancy they exiſt where none but themſelves can find any ſhadow of them.

Good ſenſe, one prominent feature of which is a due attention to the opinion and to the ſelf-love of the reſt of the world, will rarely ſuffer thoſe who poſſeſs it to obtrude even real advantages on the notice of others; and without good ſenſe, little diſtinction appears between the real bloom of youth and beauty, and the factitious charms purchaſed at a perfumer's: both are, if not equally diſguſting, equally devoid of all that can make them eſtimable or valuable. Of this good ſenſe, Celeſtina poſſeſſed ſuch a ſhare, that conſcious as ſhe was of that ſuperiority of which ſhe was continually told, no village girl had ever more unaffected ſimplicity of manners; and while her mind was irradiated by more than common genius, and her knowledge very extenſive for her time of life, ſhe was in company as ſilent, and as attentive to the opinion of others, as if ſhe had poſſeſſed only a plain and common underſtanding, with no other cultivation than what a common boarding ſchool education afforded.

Her

Her pride, therefore, ſo moderated, was rather a virtue than a blemiſh, and taught her to value herſelf, but never to deſpiſe the reſt of the world.

There was about her, too, much of that diſpoſition which the French call *ameneté*: a diſpoſition to pleaſe by ſeeming intereſted for others; by entering into their joys and ſorrows, and by a thouſand little nameleſs kindneſſes, which though they conſiſted perhaps only in attending patiently to a tale of ſorrow, told by a mourner of whom the world was tired or who was tired of the world, or liſtening with concern to the hiſtory of pain and confinement related by the valetudinarian, ſmiling at the fond enthuſiaſm of a mother when ſhe deſcribed the wit or beauty of a darling child, or admiring the plans which an improver had laid down for the alteration of his grounds, were all ſo many teſtimonies of a good diſpoſition, in the opinion of thoſe towards whom theſe little civilities were exerted, that Celeſtina had formerly had almoſt as many friends as acquaintance wherever ſhe appeared. In the circle where ſhe was now to move, more ſplendid even than that where Mrs. Willoughby's kindneſs had placed her, it was probable that under ſuch introduction as that of Lady Horatia Howard, all the charms of her perſon, talents, and temper, would be ſeen to the utmoſt advantage.

Unaccuſtomed as Vavaſour was to look far into conſequences, he had diſcerned this as ſoon as he heard of the invitation Celeſtina had received;

ceived; and he foreſaw ſo many impediments to the purſuit of his wiſhes, as well from the ſeverity and prudery which he had heard imputed to Lady Horatia, as from the interference of rivals, that he would very gladly have perſuaded her againſt accepting it, had he had any pretence to offer for his objections: but having none, and not daring to invent any, he had confined himſelf to mutterings againſt prudiſh old cats, and repreſenting to Celeſtina that ſhe was going to confine herſelf as an humble companion to bear all the caprices of a ſuperannuated woman of quality. Celeſtina heard him at firſt with concern, from an idea that he had heard Lady Horatia miſrepreſented; but when, on his afterwards repeating this converſation, ſhe found that he knew nothing of her character even from report, and only deſcribed her in ſo unpleaſant a light from his wiſh to deter Celeſtina from finding an aſylum in her houſe, anger conquered her concern, and even her complaiſance, and ſhe beſought him in very ſtrong terms never again to name Lady Horatia Howard to her, unleſs he could prevail upon himſelf to remember that ſhe deſerved, from her character rather than her rank, the reſpect of every man, and particularly of every *gentleman*.

Vavaſour had deſiſted then from talking of her in this ſtyle; but he was not at all more reconciled to the abode Celeſtina had choſen; where, if he was admitted to ſee her at all, it would probably be only in the preſence of thoſe who would be little affected with his profeſſions of that love which every day became a greater

torment

torment to him, and little dazzled by that fortune which he had to offer as the price of its return.

Celeſtina, however, to whom he had repeatedly ſaid that he would viſit her, thought ſhe could not too ſoon apprize Lady Horatia of her ſituation; and the firſt hour they were alone together, Lady Horatia expreſſed ſuch a deſire to know all that had paſſed in regard to Willoughby, ſince ſhe ſaw her on her journey into Scotland, that Celeſtina, without heſitation, but not without great emotion, related it all, and put into her hands the letters received from Willoughby.

Lady Horatia read them, and attended with great intereſt to what Celeſtina related of the ſudden appearance of Montague Thorold and the avowed pretenſions of Vavaſour; and after deliberating ſome time, ſhe ſmiled, yet not with a ſmile of pleaſure, and ſaid—"It appears, my love, as if you were only come to tantalize me for a moment with your company; for beſet as you are by theſe young men, I ſee I ſhall never be able to keep you long."

"Ah! Madam!" replied Celeſtina, "neither Mr. Vavaſour nor Mr. Thorold can excite a wiſh in me to quit your protection while it is convenient to you to afford it to me; and for my firſt, my moſt beloved friend! my—what ſhall I call him?—he talks not of returning to England: and if he does——"

"And if he does return," interrupted Lady Horatia, "you muſt, and rightly formed as your heart is, you do, I am ſure underſtand, that

that while the fainteſt miſt of doubt hangs over you, you ought never to meet him, unleſs indeed one of you were married."

"Allow me to aſk, Madam," ſaid Celeſtina, in a tremulous voice, "allow me to aſk your Ladyſhip, who were ſo well acquainted with Mrs. Willoughby, whether from any recollection of remarks made in her life time, you have any perſuaſion as to the foundation of thoſe doubts."

"You might have ſeen," replied Lady Horatia, "from the purport of a letter I wrote to you while you were in Scotland, that I had even then heard rumours of the cauſe of your ſeparation from Willoughby, which Lady Caſtlenorth had very induſtriouſly ſet forth. I judged, from what I then heard, that if it was not true, her art would be ſo effectually exerted that you would never diſcover the deception; and that you muſt be rendered unhappy. It was therefore I adviſed you to detach yourſelf as much as you could from what is childiſhly called a firſt love. I thought, that what Mr. Willoughby was then ſaid to be on the point of completing—his marriage with Miſs Fitz-Hayman—was the very beſt thing he could do, both for his own ſake and your's: for if it ſhould be found you are related, the very idea is attended with too much horror to be dwelt upon; and even if it is a fabrication of Lady Caſtlenorth's, unleſs it can be clearly proved to be ſo, your whole life might be embittered by it; beſides, my dear Celeſtina, how could Mr. Willoughby,

circumſtanced as I underſtand he is in regard to money matters, how could he afford to marry you?"

Celeſtina ſighed deeply from the recollection of the arrangements as to all thoſe affairs which Willoughby had ſo fondly made, and to which ſhe had ſo fondly liſtened; then recovering herſelf, ſhe repeated her queſtion, which ſhe thought Lady Horatia had evaded—"But has your Ladyſhip any recollection of circumſtances in Mrs. Willoughby's conduct or life, that give you reaſon to believe this unhappy ſtory may *not* be the fabrication of Lady Caſtlenorth?"

"Not from my own knowledge," replied ſhe, "for I was in Italy with General Howard, who was then in an ill ſtate of health, at the time Mr. Willoughby's father died, and for two years afterwards. When I returned to England, I was abſorbed in domeſtic uneaſineſs, and heard, without attending much to them, thoſe goſſiping ſtories which fly about for a week or a month, till ſome newer ſcandal cauſes them to be forgotten. Yet I do recollect, I own, hearing ſome hints of Mrs. Willoughby's partiality for Mr. Everard, and that they were ſuppoſed to be privately married: but I accounted for it, when I attended to it at all, by recollecting that Mrs. Willoughby was at the time of her huſband's death, a young and beautiful woman, with a good fortune, and an admirable underſtanding; advantages, which, while they created envy and malignity in the minds of an hundred people who poſſeſſed nothing of all that, among her own ſex; produced as many pretenders to her

her favour among the other; every one of whom, though ſome were men of rank and all of courſe eminent enough in their own eyes, were diſmiſſed by her on their firſt application with a polite but poſitive refuſal. Theſe men were piqued, and theſe women were ſpiteful; and they together found out a reaſon for the unheard of refuſal of a young and admired widow, by ſuppoſing her attached to her ſon's tutor; not one of them, from the information of their own hearts, being able to conceive it poſſible that ſhe made this ſacrifice to maternal tenderneſs, and refuſed her hand to a ſecond huſband, becauſe ſhe would ſuffer nothing to interrupt the attention ſhe owed to the children of the firſt."

"You do not then believe," ſaid Celeſtina eagerly—"you do not then believe, my dear Madam, that there is any truth in this odious ſtory?"

"Pardon me," anſwered Lady Horatia; "I did not ſay ſo."

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed Celeſtina, "is it poſſible you can believe it."

"My dear young friend," ſaid ſhe calmly, "I have lived ſo long in the world, that though I do not haſtily and on ſlight grounds believe ſuch a report, yet I ſhould not *wonder* were it in the event to be verified."

Celeſtina who had always in her own heart oppoſed the idea of her being the daughter of Mrs. Willoughby, though ſhe felt and ſubmitted to the neceſſity of ſeeing Willoughby no more while one doubt remained unſatisfied, now

changed colour, affected as well by the manner of Lady Horatia as by what ſhe ſaid. She had not, however, courage to preſs her farther, but ſpoke of the viſit intended her by Mr. Vavaſour—"I wiſh it were poſſible," ſaid ſhe, "to convince him at once that I ſhall never liſten to the propoſal with which he is pleaſed to honour me. As Willoughby's friend," added ſhe, and ſighed, "I ſhall be always glad to ſee him; but in any other light, never——"

"I think you wrong however," replied Lady Horatia, "in wiſhing ſo haſtily to diſmiſs him. He is a man of family, of fortune, and, as you allow, not diſagreeable in his perſon; and for his morals, they are not worſe, I ſuppoſe, than thoſe of other young men; he is allowed, I think, to be generous, good tempered, and not to want ſenſe. If every idea of Willoughby is at an end, why not relieve yourſelf and him from a ſtate of uneaſy retroſpection by receiving the addreſſes of one whom he cannot diſapprove."

"Are you in earneſt, Lady Horatia?" cried Celeſtina.

"Certainly I am," replied ſhe: "at leaſt, I venture very ſeriouſly to adviſe you not to diſmiſs Vavaſour ſo haſtily, but receive him as an acquaintance till you are ſure you diſapprove of him as a lover."

"Dear Madam!" reſumed Celeſtina, "were I capable of giving away my hand ſo lightly, is Mr. Vavaſour a man who you think could make me happy?"

"Nay,"

"Nay," replied Lady Horatia, "if there is any body whom you prefer that is another point: I only ſay, that if you feel yourſelf perfectly diſengaged, I cannot think Vavaſour ought to be diſmiſſed haſtily. Perhaps half the young women in London would think a more deſirable match could not offer."

This converſation was interrupted by the entrance of a ſervant, who announced the arrival of the perſon who was the ſubject of it; and Vavaſour immediately entered the room.

He condeſcended to pay to Lady Horatia more reſpect than he generally ſhewed to thoſe who were indifferent to him. Hers was, however, that ſort of company in which he by no means found himſelf at eaſe; and his eagerneſs to entertain Celeſtina alone, once or twice broke through the reſtraint which he impoſed upon himſelf.

Lady Horatia, who was candid and liberal, ſaw in him only an unformed and unſteady young man, whoſe morals and manners required nothing but time and good company to render eſtimable. She ſaw the prejudice Celeſtina ſeemed to entertain towards him, as a mere prejudice; and on his riſing to depart, gave him a general invitation to her houſe.

Celeſtina who knew the refinement of her mind, and the delicacy of her taſte, was amazed at her ſeeming to approve him; and when he was gone, ventured to ſay—"What does your Ladyſhip think of Mr. Vavaſour?"

"Why really very well," replied ſhe. "He is very young, and quite unformed; but with thoſe

thoſe giddy manners, and amid that unpoliſhed converſation, there is no want of underſtanding."

Celeſtina again ſighed. "No," anſwered ſhe, "no want of underſtanding certainly; for Willoughby was not likely to ſelect him for his friend had that been wanting: but yet they were ſo unlike—ſo very unlike—that I have often wondered at their long and intimate friendſhip. Vavaſour is ſo head ſtrong, ſo impetuous, ſo ſelf-willed, and ſometimes ſo boiſterous, while Willoughby, with more imagination, more genius, more ſtrength of underſtanding, is ſo calm, ſo reaſonable, ſo attentive to every body——"

She was too much affected to proceed in the catalogue of his virtues, a ſubject on which ſhe had hardly ever touched before; but ſtopped, from the emotion ſhe felt; and Lady Horatia, who ſaw and pitied the ſource of that emotion, changed the converſation.

Vavaſour, flattered by the reception he had met with from the preſent protectreſs of Celeſtina, and more in love than ever in proportion as ſhe was in his opinion infinitely handſomer now than ever, was now very frequent in his viſits; while Celeſtina's whole mind was occupied by the neceſſity ſhe was under of writing to Willoughby, and the difficulty ſhe was under how to anſwer with propriety ſuch a letter as that ſhe had received from him. At length, with many efforts, and more tears, the letter was written and approved of by Lady Horatia; and Celeſtina endeavoured, in compliance with the

the wiſhes of her friend, and with more earneſtneſs than ſucceſs, to diſmiſs from her mind ſome of its corroſive ſenſations, and to enter, if not with avidity, at leaſt with cheerfulneſs, into that ſtyle of faſhionable life, which, though ſhe could not always enjoy, ſhe never failed to adorn.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIV.

VAVASOUR had been with her every day ſince her arrival in town, which was almoſt a week, and Montague Thorold had never appeared. While Celeſtina at once wondered at his abſence and rejoiced at it, (though perhaps her ſenſations were mingled with a ſlight degree of mortification,) for while ſhe diſdained every ſpecies of coquetry, ſhe yet felt humiliated by the ſudden ceſſation of that attachment which he had taken ſuch pains to convince her, could not be deſtroyed even by deſpair.

Impatience, however, to hear of Willoughby, was ſtill predominant in her mind: and for this purpoſe ſhe wiſhed to ſee Lady Molyneux. No acquaintance ſubſiſted between her and Lady Horatia; and therefore ſhe determined to write and beg leave to wait on her old friend. This ſhe executed in a note to the following purport:

"Miſs de Mornay, being in town for a ſhort "time, ſolicits permiſſion to wait on Lady "Molyneux at any time when her Ladyſhip "may be diſengaged."

This

This note was delivered to Lady Molyneux in company. She read it, and as if ſhe had forgotten totally the claim Celeſtina had upon her from their having been brought up together, and from her mother's fondneſs for her, ſhe aſked careleſsly whether the meſſenger waited for an anſwer; the ſervant replied, that he did. Lady Molyneux had formed an idea that Celeſtina, of whom ſhe had not thought for many months, was now wandering about the world in a dependant and inferior ſituation, and might perhaps expect an invitation to ſtay with her, which ſhe had no inclination to give; ſhe therefore in a cold and careleſs way bade the footman tell the perſon who brought the meſſage, that being then engaged with company ſhe could not write an anſwer, but would take an opportunity of letting Miſs de Mornay know when ſhe ſhould be at home. She then entered again into converſation with her gueſts; and it was not till the next day that ſhe remembered having heard from Celeſtina at all; when ſeeing the note on her table as ſhe was going to dreſs for the opera, ſhe gave it to her maid, and bade her put her in mind to ſend an anſwer to it, and fix the firſt morning ſhe ſhould be diſengaged.

Celeſtina in the mean time received the verbal anſwer to her note with more concern than ſurpriſe. She had not expected much kindneſs from Matilda, who during ſo many months had never once written to, or enquired after her; but ſhe could not without internal anguiſh reflect that it was the daughter of her more than

mother, the friend of her orphan youth, and the ſiſter of Willoughby, who was thus inſenſible of all thoſe feelings which ſwelled her heart when the ſcenes of that orphan youth, and the pleaſures of that infantine friendſhip, were remembered.

Amid theſe painful reflections, however, there was one which gave her ſome degree of conſolation. She thought that Lady Molyneux could not, either from any knowledge of her own, or from the reports ſpread by Lady Caſtlenorth, believe that any relationſhip by blood ſubſiſted between them; for ſhe ſuppoſed it to be impoſſible for her in that caſe to treat with ſo much cold neglect a perſon whom ſhe knew to be her ſiſter. On this, therefore, ſhe dwelt, as a circumſtance favourable to the notion ſhe moſt wiſhed to entertain; and as two or three days paſſed on without her hearing from Lady Molyneux, her eagerneſs to enquire of her ſubſided into a ſtrong belief that ſhe knew nothing.

Vavaſour aſſiduouſly attended every day at the houſe of Lady Horatia during this interval, and contrived to obtain for himſelf ſome degree of intereſt in her favour. The openneſs and candour of his temper, was with her an apology for half his faults; while his youth and natural vivacity obtained his pardon for the reſt. His fortune was ſplendid, and his family ancient and reſpectable; while his perſon was ſuch as could hardly fail to pleaſe; and his manners, careleſs and wild as they were, appeared to advantage in the eyes of Lady Horatia; who had been diſguſted by the coldneſs and apathy, either

either real or affected, of many of thoſe young men of faſhion who frequented her houſe.

On Celeſtina, however, the frequent opportunities ſhe had of obſerving Vavaſour had a very oppoſite effect. In *her* mind a ſtandard of perfection had been early formed, and every man ſhe now ſaw was pleaſing or otherwiſe as they reſembled or differed from Willoughby. She continued therefore to treat Vavaſour with encreaſing coldneſs; and ſaw with concern that Lady Horatia was every day more ſolicitous for his ſucceſs.

Willoughby, in the mean time, continued to wander about Europe without any fixed plan, and merely flying from himſelf. Still anxious to gather information on the ſubject which had deſtroyed all the happineſs of his life, and having little hopes of obtaining any but by means of Lady Caſtlenorth, he often conquered his reluctance, and viſited his uncle at a villa he now inhabited near Naples; where he was always received with pleaſure, and where, ſave only on the point which alone intereſted him, Lady Caſtlenorth ſeemed to deſcend from her natural character, to endeavour by every means in her power to gratify and oblige him: and her lord, who really loved his nephew as much as his imbecility of mind allowed him to love any body, and who ſaw in him and in his alliance with his daughter, the only chance of perpetuating a family which was the great object of his pride, became hourly more eager to ſee him, and more gratified by his company.

It has been obſerved, that there are two reaſons which equally operate in determining ſome people to marry—love and hatred; and ſomething reſembling both theſe ſentiments agitated the heart of Miſs Fitz-Hayman. Of an involuntary preference to her couſin, ſhe had been ſenſible from the firſt moment ſhe ſaw him; and his indifference, his preference of Celeſtina, and even his poſitively declining the honour of her hand, had mortified without curing her of her partiality; though reſentment and diſdain were mingled with the inclination ſhe could not conquer, and which neither his abſence nor his coldneſs had prevented from gaining on her heart. When ſhe ſaw him again, new force was given to this paſſion: he was leſs handſome, leſs animated; but more intereſting and more pleaſing; while his melancholy and dejection, though created by another object, gave him ſo many charms in the opinion of Miſs Fitz-Hayman, that her pride yielded to them; and as it was now very certain that he had no attachment but to Celeſtina, whom, ſince ſhe fully believed their relationſhip, ſhe knew he never could marry, ſhe doubted not of being able to inſpire him with an affection for her, and, in returning to England his wife, of fulfilling at once her parents wiſhes and her own.

Lady Caſtlenorth, whoſe love of intrigue time had by no means diminiſhed, and whoſe arrogance had been deeply wounded by the failure of her original plan, which ſhe fancied Willoughby would with ſo much eagerneſs have

have embraced, was now doubly anxious to avail herſelf of the advantage ſhe had gained by having prevented the intended union of Willoughby and Celeſtina. Pique and reſentment operated upon her mind with even more force than attachment and regard would have on another. Beſides, in the marriage of her daughter with any man of ſuperior rank and independent fortune, ſhe found great probability that her influence would be leſſened and her government diſclaimed; but in uniting her daughter with Willoughby, whoſe fortune was in diſorder and whoſe temper was remarkably eaſy, ſhe foreſaw the continuation of her power, and that ſhe ſhould neither ſee her daughter take place of her, or eſcape from her influence.

Whatever was the wiſh of her friends, the aſſiduous Mrs. Calder officiouſly adopted; and when ſhe found how much Lord Caſtlenorth had ſet his heart on concluding the marriage between his daughter and her nephew, ſhe applied all her rhetoric to prove its advantages, and all her art to ſecure its ſucceſs.

Willoughby was unconſcious of the plans that were thus forming in the family of his uncle, and did not think it poſſible that their pride would allow them to ſolicit again an alliance which he had once declined: he therefore went to them without any apprehenſion that he was encouraging expectations he never meant to fulfil, and had indeed no other deſign than to lie in wait for traces of that involved myſtery,

tery, which he ſtill thought had been created by the intrigues and machinations of Lady Caſtlenorth.

In art, however, ſhe was ſo much his ſuperior, that the very means he adopted to obtain ſatisfaction, was, in her hands, a means of bewildering more deeply. She now affected the moſt perfect candour; and whenever ſhe ſaw him touching with a tender hand on the ſubject, ſhe appeared to feel for his uneaſineſs, and ready to give him every ſatisfaction in her power.

Willing to avail himſelf of this apparent diſpoſition in his favour, he one day, when he was ſitting alone with Lady Caſtlenorth, aſked her, whether ſhe had now no traces of Hannah Biſcoe, the ſervant who alone ſeemed poſſeſſed of the circumſtances into which he moſt wiſhed to enquire. Lady Caſtlenorth anſwered with great apparent ingenuouſneſs, that ſhe did not exactly know, as ſhe had no connection at all with her, but that if he wiſhed to make any enquiry, her woman ſhould write out the directions to her relations, which ſhe did not herſelf recollect.

Willoughby eagerly ſeized on this offer, and begged that theſe directions might be immediately written out for him. Lady Caſtlenorth inſtantly called her woman, and queſtioned her as to her recollection of the abode of the relations of this Hannah Biſcoe; the woman named what ſhe knew; her Lady directed her to put it down, and Willoughby left the houſe, flattering himſelf that he had at length obtained a clue

clue which might lead him to eſcape from the labyrinth of error and miſtake where he had ſo ſeverely ſuffered.

It was, however, by no means Lady Caſtlenorth's plan to ſuffer Willoughby to return to England in ſearch of this woman, whoſe direction ſhe ſeemed ſo willing to give him; and as from the eagerneſs and agitation he expreſſed on receiving this paper, it appeared but too likely that he meditated going himſelf, in order to preclude the poſſibility of his views being again fruſtrated, ſhe found that all her art would be neceſſary to prevent his eſcaping her.

Fortunately for her views, Lord Caſtlenorth was ſeized a few hours afterwards with one of thoſe illneſſes which had ſo often reduced him to the brink of the grave; and the preſence of his nephew, which he ſo earneſtly deſired, the generous and feeling heart of Willoughby could not deny; while he endured the cruelleſt reſtraint in ſtaying, and thought every hour an age till he could go himſelf to England, and renew his hitherto hopeleſs reſearch after the real ſituation of Celeſtina.

Thus paſſed, however, a month after the arrival of Celeſtina in London; and then the arrival of an Engliſh gentleman at Naples brought him her letter, written in anſwer to that ſhe received at York. Nothing could equal the impatience with which he had expected this letter, but the pain he felt at reading it. He learned by it that ſhe was returning to London, where he fancied ſo many objects would combine to ſoften her concern for their ſeparation; and

and he fancied the letter expreſſed too much calmneſs, and that ſhe ſubmitted to the ſeparation which he had himſelf indicated as too likely to be inevitable, without feeling half that regret and anguiſh which he expected ſhe would have deſcribed. The reluctance ſhe expreſſed to be left to the protection of Vavaſour, made him believe his preſence interfered with her preference to ſome other perſon—a preference, of which the very ſuſpicion threw him into agonies at the very moment his reaſon told him that he ought not to think of her for himſelf. Jealouſy now added to the pangs of diſappointed love, and the letter which Celeſtina had endeavoured to word ſo as to calm and ſooth him, and to teach him to ſubmit to that neceſſity of which he allowed the force, ſeemed to him to breathe only indifference, and to prove that ſhe ſaw him, without regret, relinquiſh his claim to thoſe affections, which were already in poſſeſſion of another.

All his ſufferings were confirmed and encreaſed, when a day or two afterwards he had an opportunity of converſing with Mr. Jarvis, the gentleman who brought the letter, and who was haſtening to Rome. He had been often in company with Celeſtina at parties where ſhe attended Lady Horatia Howard; and believing, as all the world now did, that Willoughby was certainly to be married to Miſs Fitz-Hayman; and that the marriage of Celeſtina would be a ſubject of ſatisfaction to him, he related without heſitation the reports he had heard of her being ſoon to give her hand to Mr. Vavaſour.

To

To the amazement Willoughby expreſſed at the firſt intimation of ſuch a match, Jarvis, who entirely miſtook its cauſe, ſaid—"Yes, it is wonderful to be ſure, conſidering all we know of Vavaſour, that he ſhould ſeriouſly intend to marry."

So acute was the pain which the intelligence Willoughby had juſt received gave him, that he could make no anſwer to this; and Jarvis fancying him out of ſpirits for ſome reaſon or other which he never thought of enquiring after, ſoon after left him to meditate on what he had heard.

There was "room for meditation even to "madneſs," when he recollected a thouſand circumſtances that had till now appeared of no moment; he was convinced that Vavaſour had long admired Celeſtina; he had himſelf reſigned her, or at leaſt intimated that he dared not think of her; and the perſon, the fortune, the impetuous ardour of Vavaſour, which his agitated mind repreſented as irreſiſtible, now all crouded on his recollection, and he doubted not but that before he could reach England, Celeſtina would have given herſelf away.

Yet with the horrid myſtery unremoved, on what pretence could he wiſh or even think of impeding a marriage with a man of whom his regard was evinced by his long friendſhip, and who had ſo affluent a fortune. As a lover, he could himſelf no longer interfere; as her relation, he could not bear to conſider himſelf; and were he only ſuch, an alliance with Vavaſour could not be objected to on any reaſonable grounds.

The

The longer he reflected, therefore, on what he had heard, the more unable he became to ſupport his reflections; and they concluded in a reſolution to ſet out immediately for England; a determination which he communicated to his uncle the ſame day, who was affected by it even to tears.

Lady Caſtlenorth had, in converſation with Mr. Jarvis, heard the report of Celeſtina's intended marriage, and knew immediately how to account for the extreme uneaſineſs Willoughby betrayed, and his ſudden reſolution to depart for England. When Jarvis, who proceeded immediately on his journey, was gone, ſhe found an opportunity a few hours afterwards to ſpeak to Willoughby on Engliſh news, and the change of his countenance confirmed her conjectures. This was an occaſion not to be loſt; ſhe ventured, what ſhe uſually avoided, to name Celeſtina, and to expreſs her ſatisfaction that ſhe was likely to be ſo well married. "After all the converſation there has been about this young perſon," ſaid ſhe, affecting to have a great deal of feeling for her, "I am very glad that the poor girl will be ſo well eſtabliſhed. A man of Vavaſour's independent fortune can well afford to pleaſe himſelf; and I doubt not but that you and Lady Molyneux muſt on every account rejoice at her change of name, and that nothing more will be ſaid of her origin." Though Lady Caſtlenorth affected to ſpeak with ſentiment, and to ſoften her voice, her piercing and enquiring eyes were demanding from the countenance of Willoughby that explanation which ſhe knew it would give of his real ſentiments; and ſhe ſaw the blood forſake his cheeks,

cheeks, his lips turn white and tremble, and a mingled expreſſion of doubt, fear, anger, and diſdain, marked on his features. "If I were certain, Madam," ſaid he, "that all the odious reports, on which *you*, who firſt promulgated them, have invariably refuſed to ſatisfy me as you might do —if I were ſure they were all true——"

"If!" interrupted Lady Caſtlenorth: "can you then doubt their truth? Will you compel me to make, by adducing thoſe proofs, a matter public, which you ought on every account to wiſh might be buried in eternal oblivion?"

"Will I compel you, Madam! Yes ſurely I will if the means are in my power. 'Tis for this only I have been ſo much with you; not to compel you indeed, but in the hope of prevailing upon you, if you really poſſeſs the evidence you have often meditated, to give it me all without reſerve."

"Well," cried Lady Caſtlenorth, "I have now given you a direction to the only perſon who is in poſſeſſion of this evidence. You might have procured it as long ſince as when I interfered to ſave you from the horrors of a marriage which muſt have rendered you and the object of your unhappily placed affection miſerable for ever: but then you flew from me, and reſented my friendſhip as if it had been an injury. Since that time it is not my fault if you have been unable to find this perſon, whom I have never ſecreted, and of whom I know little or nothing. Satisfied in having ſaved you from an abyſs of guilt and miſery, I truſted to time and your own principles to convince you of the injuſtice your ſuſpicions

did

did me. You have ſearched for proofs in thoſe places where your mother is ſaid to have been with her young charge; tell me, have you ever found any reaſon to believe the facts I told you of to be of my invention—to have been totally unfounded?"

Willoughby was conſcious he had not; yet at the ſame moment he diſcovered that Lady Caſtlenorth had watched him, and knew of the journies he had made to Hieres and to other places. Vexed and angry, not knowing what to think, or whether he was impoſed on by her ſuperior cunning, or was needleſsly tormenting himſelf in puſhing the enquiry farther, he could not command the various uneaſy ſenſations with which he was agitated; and therefore abruptly leaving the room, he haſtened to his lodgings, and gave directions for his immediate departure for England.

He was concerned, however, for his uncle, and returned in the evening to take leave of him: he found him ſitting with Mrs. Calder, who was reading to him a ſort of *catalogue raiſonnée* of the various ills to which the human body is ſubject; and as they paſſed in melancholy review before him, he ſtopped her to conſult her on his own ſymptoms, and to enquire of her whether ſhe did not think ſuch and ſuch complaints were about to add to his bodily infirmities. Mrs. Calder, who was always obliged to every body who fancied her ſkill enabled her to anſwer ſuch queſtions, was delighted with the opportunity this afforded her of exhibiting her knowledge to Willoughby, from whom ſhe could never procure the ſmalleſt voluntary attention; and the

converſation

converſation became ſo irkſome, that having waited near an hour, and ſeeing it not likely to end, Willoughby at length ſtarted up and approached to take his uncle's hand, when Miſs Fitz-Hayman, in all the languor of unhappy love, ſwam into the room.

On her entrance, Willoughby ſat down again, as being unwilling to have her ſuppoſe he rudely fled from her approach. She put on an air of affected humility, and looked as if ſhe thanked him for even this ſlight mark of attention. She gave a loud and deep ſigh, prolonged as much as poſſible; her eyes, robbed of their fire, were turned mournfully upon him—"You are going from us, Mr. Willoughby?" ſaid ſhe, in a ſubdued and faint voice.

He replied, that buſineſs, which could not longer be delayed, made his return to England neceſſary.

Another deep ſigh was all the lady's anſwer to this information: but Lord Caſtlenorth cried—"I am ſorry to hear you ſay ſo, George—very ſorry. I did hope that we might have all returned together as ſoon as my complaints ſubſide a little. As to buſineſs, you ought to remember that all your money matters might be eaſily ſettled if you pleaſed."

"I thank you, Sir," replied Willoughby, who ſaw whither the diſcourſe would tend; "but thoſe matters are the leaſt of my concern."

"Stay, however, one day," ſaid Lord Caſtlenorth, "that you may execute ſome buſineſs for me. Surely, nephew, you will oblige me ſo far."

Though every hour's delay was death to him, he at length agreed, on his uncle's repeated entreaties,

treaties, to ſtay four and twenty hours longer at Naples; and then leaving the room, he was followed by the officious Mrs. Calder, who deſiring leave to ſay half a dozen words to him alone, he ſuffered her to ſhew him into another room.

She put on a moſt rueful countenance, ſtroked her handkerchief, plaited her ruffles, and uttering an "oh dear!" between a ſigh and a groan, ſhe continued thus—"My dear good Sir! I wiſh to have a little converſation relative to your ſituation in this dear worthy family, for every member of which my poor heart bleeds."

"And yet, Madam," interrupted Willoughby impatiently, "there is, perhaps, hardly a family among your acquaintance who are, in the opinion of the world, ſo little objects of compaſſion."

"The world!" exclaimed the lady. "Lord bleſs me, what ſignifies the opinion of the world. The world cannot ſee as I do into all their feelings. There's your moſt excellent uncle, as worthy a man as ever exiſted, ſinking, poor good dear man! under five complaints, all incurable, and denied, alas! the only ſatisfaction this world has to give him—ſeeing his darling daughter ſettled to his wiſhes, which would ſmooth his path to heaven, and leave him nothing but bodily pain—which is ſevere enough—nothing but bodily pain, as I obſerved, to contend with. Oh! Sir, what heart felt ſatisfaction it muſt be to you! what comfortable reflection for a good heart, ſuch as inhabits your breaſt no doubt—I ſay, what delight it would be to you, to hold forth the amiable hand that ſhould—

'Rock the cradle of repoſing age,'

and

and ſooth the latter days of ſo excellent and worthy an uncle."

The whine, and the hypocritical grimace with which this ſpeech was delivered, would have conquered the gravity of Willoughby at any other time: but he now felt his diſguſt irritated by impatience, amounting almoſt to rage; but he repreſſed his feelings with difficulty, unwilling by oppoſition to lengthen the converſation, which Mrs. Calder ſuffered not to languiſh, but thus went on—"Ah dear! what a melancholy reflection, as I obſerved, it is, to conſider, that, poor good man, this is not likely to happen; and inſtead of it, this darling daughter, this fine young woman, heireſs to ſuch a noble fortune, ſo beautiful, ſo accompliſhed, ſo elegant—undeniably the firſt match in England in point of rank and beauty and fortune—ſo lovely in perſon, ſo amiable in mind, ſo elevated in underſtanding—far, alas! from being happy, ſees her youth paſs away in a hopeleſs paſſion, which from her infancy ſhe has been taught to cheriſh, and which now her reaſon, aided by her affronted pride, tries in vain to repreſs. Oh! Mr. Willoughby! Mr. Willoughby! the happineſs that you refuſe, by how many would be courted! The heart that you diſdain to accept, by how many would be adored! Dear creature! when I ſee how thin ſhe is grown, and know the cauſe of it ſo well!—when I hear her ſigh, and know how injurious it is to her dear delicate conſtitution, I really, Sir—you will forgive my zeal—have looked upon you with amazement, and have aſked myſelf whether you have eyes—whether you have a heart——"

"To

"To what, Madam," interrupted Willoughby, who could no longer endure her harangue patiently—"to what does all this tend?"

"Tend, dear Sir!" replied Mrs. Calder; "why certainly to open your eyes if poſſible to a ſenſe of the happineſs you are throwing away; to prevail on you to anſwer the expectations of all your friends, to conſult your own intereſt, and to become all you ought to be."

"You mean well, I conclude, Madam," anſwered Willoughby, "by all this; but you miſtake greatly, when you ſuppoſe that the alliance to which you allude would contribute to the happineſs of any of the parties for whom you are intereſted. I have no heart to offer Miſs Fitz-Hayman; and if the partiality which you repreſent exiſts any where but in your own imagination, it would be ungenerous to encourage and unworthy to avail myſelf of it, feeling as I do that I never can anſwer it as I am very willing to allow the young lady's merits deſerve: excuſe me, therefore, if I entreat of you never to conſider me as being likely to be more cloſely united with the family of Lord Caſtlenorth than I at preſent am, and to declare to you, that by perſiſting in preſſing it, my uncle will put out of my power to teſtify for him that regard and affection which I really feel."

Willoughby then left the room; and Mrs. Calder, piqued and mortified at the little ſucceſs of her rhetoric, went reluctantly to give an account to Lady Caſtlenorth, by whom ſhe had been employed, of the ill ſucceſs of her embaſſy.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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